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© Sutty – *that's another one to me Ray!*

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© Sutty









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COMMENT

This month's bombshell is the news that the Molson Kawasaki team will pull the plug on racing at the end of this season. One of the biggest and most professional teams on the GP circuit, the Church family-owned outfit cite 'changing family priorities' as the reason for the decision.

In the increasingly cut-throat world of GP motocross, Molson Kawasaki have become something of a rarity – a family-run team that operates on respect, trust and a passion for the sport. And they are principles which have stood them in good stead since the fledgling MJ Church Kawasaki team was formed over a decade ago.

Over the years Mike and Paula Church and eldest daughter and current team manager Lisa have been responsible for nurturing some seriously fast talent. Most notable are Stephen Sword and Tommy Searle but they've also helped riders including Adam Lyons, Mark Hucklebridge, Stuart Flockhart, Carl Nunn, Gareth Swanepoel and Gautier Paulin along the way.

There are, however, wider implications that we ignore at our peril. While I'm sure that the aforementioned changing family priorities are the main driving force behind the decision, Mike also indicates that the current financial situation affecting the western economy is another factor. Think about it. All teams rely on big financial input from sponsors, most of which operate in the 'real world' of sky-high fuel prices and soaring inflation. With the credit crunch chomping down on businesses, cut-backs are inevitable – and it's not rocket science to work out where savings will be made...

Anyway, let's move on to a happier subject and the return of top-flight MX to Foxhill. I was on daddy duties so couldn't make it but spending time with my little 'un is just about the only thing that could have kept me away from a Maxxis round at the awesome Wiltshire venue. I've spent many a happy day burning in the sun or wallowing in the mud at Foxhill and more than a few nights necking beer with the boys. At the des Nats in '98 I spent three very muddy, uncomfortable nights sleeping in the boot of a Nissan Prairie but I'd much rather have done that than stop at a hotel and miss out on the craic.

The years have all blended together (and I can't be arsed going through back issues to confirm dates) but I remember one swelteringly sunny day interviewing Stephen Sword after he'd been on the GP scoresheet for the first time – I think it was at the same double-header that Seb Tortelli nearly torpedoed me after he crashed off the first tabletop and onto the valley floor. And what about Peter Johansson's huge endo as he holeshot an MXdN moto and drifted wide into the slop at the side of the track. Or Ricky Carmichael struggling in the mud the same year. Or Mike Healey racing the Shell Advance round there. Or Mark Jones leading a 250 GP moto. Or Dobby winning in Y2K at a triple-header before rain stopped play. Or, or, or...

The atmosphere at Foxhill – rain or shine – was always electric for the big meetings so it's great news that eight years after the last GP there it's hosted a British championship round. I can't see the world championship teams ever returning to its super-steep slopes but the Maxxis men are the next best thing – sometimes you've got to be happy with what you get.

Finally this month, a big thanks to Paul Walker, Tony Bayman and the rest of the gang for a very enjoyable day thrashing Aprilias around the Welsh countryside for our test of the Italian V-twins. In the wrong hands they may be a bit too hot to handle in the tight n' twisty stuff but on open trails they're a real blast – and they stand up pretty well to being slung down the road n'all!

Searle

© Ray Archer



Lisa and MJ gang up on Kawasaki Europe's Steve Guttridge

OVERANDOUT!

END OF THE LINE FOR MOLSON KAWASAKI

One of Britain's most professional and long-standing motocross teams – Molson Kawasaki – will cease to operate in 2009. Pressures related to the current economic climate and changing family priorities mean that team owners Mike and Paula Church along with their daughter and team manager Lisa feel they're unable to give the team the full focus and attention it both needs and deserves.

After reaching an amicable agreement with Kawasaki – whose factory MX2 team they run – to end all racing activities after the end of the 2008 season, the shock news broke in the form of a press release sent just hours after the team's four riders, mechanics, sponsors and other team personnel had been informed.

Growing from a grassroots family-based race team competing purely at schoolboy level, the MJ Church squad grew in stature over the years to the point where it's now one of the biggest and most respected teams in the motocross world having supported some of the best riders in the sport today – Stephen Sword, Gautier Paulin, Tommy Searle, Carl Nunn, Gareth Swanepoel and Katherine Prumm among others.

While the team is undoubtedly a labour of love and is surely a success because of it, team owner Mike Church is also a shrewd businessman in his own right and realises that with the current economic climate along with the changing family priorities it would be almost impossible to continue running the team so successfully.

"We are bitterly disappointed that we have to stop but we were at a crossroads and it was very difficult to know what to do for the best," says Mike. "A number of factors brought us to this decision but the biggest one of those was that Lisa would not be able to do the job that she has been doing and control what she has controlled in recent years."

"After that we looked carefully at budgets and where we are with it all and to have to

employ an extra person to run everything for us suddenly became financially unviable – especially in this current market. I think we're all wide-eyed enough to see that we're headed for some quite difficult times and we would rather call a halt to it now rather than get in a mess with it in the middle of next year.

"The sponsorship and support that we've enjoyed from outside of the motocross industry is getting increasingly difficult for these companies to withstand. People are having to draw back because of the way the economy is now and looking at it as a whole picture we decided that rather than struggle we'd rather stop. We take our motocross very seriously and we have never owed anybody anything, we've always stood independently and I'd hate to end up in a position where that just wasn't possible.

"Cutting back was an option but we decided that at the level we've run the team at to date it would be difficult to do that – we have looked at every circumstance we possibly can but we realised that everything has to end at some point and we feel like we've done a good job so far and so we'd hate to continue and end up making a bad job of it.

"We've had a very enjoyable and very healthy relationship with Kawasaki and we've enjoyed their support all the way through. I only hope that they feel that we've contributed back to them too both through our technical side which I know has been very intense over the last two years on the development of the bikes – we've already seen some of our work reach the production bikes – and also through the race results and race wins that we've so badly wanted but not always got.

"We're really looking forward to the arrival of a new one in January and we'll definitely still be involved in motocross through Tom and Josh and hopefully with Stephen, Gautier and Gareth because although we haven't come up with a solution to all the problems that will come out of this we'd like to keep helping them if we can."



The MXdN is coming to a track near you – that's if you live near Donington – on September 27/28

BEST OF BRITISH #1!

BILLY, TOMMY AND SHAUN GET THE NOD FOR MXdN

The British squad for this year's MX des Nations has been revealed with Tommy Searle, Billy MacKenzie and Shaun Simpson announced as the riders who will represent Team GB at Donington Park on September 27/28.

"It's no surprise to anybody that that Billy and Tommy are in the team," says team manager Mark Eastwood. "It was the third member who was always going to be a very difficult choice. Shaun's form has certainly stepped up a gear recently and he is regularly starting to challenge the established GP riders for podium places."

"Billy's MX1 British championship form has been devastating, leaving everybody else to fight for second place. Tommy's world championship form speaks for itself taking his first double victory and leading the series after round seven. Both riders like the Donington Park circuit and achieved excellent results at the MXGP in 2007, I'm sure Shaun's first appearance in the team will spur him on even more."

"We will certainly be aiming for the win. Tommy now has much more experience of climbing to the top of a world championship rostrum, Billy's form on home soil and Shaun's determination – plus of course the support from

the partisan crowd – will add inspiration to the team."

Easty's 'difficult choice' was between Shaun and Molson Kawasaki factory rider Stephen Sword. Swordy had the beating of Shaun in the British championship but was trailing his fellow Scot in the world championship. He then injured his shoulder at the French GP, lost his Maxxis lead riding hurt at Desertmartin and was forced to sit out two further GPs.

Swordy's taken the decision on the chin – but he's not given up yet. "Easty rang me the week before South Africa and told me he'd chosen Shaun over me and I was like 'fair enough – I'm injured and Shaun's been riding very well'," says the 27-year-old. "I get on well with Mark and he made the right decision at the time."

"Obviously I want to be in the team but it's a difficult one. Shaun is riding well – you can't take that away from him – but up until my injury I think I had the beating of him."

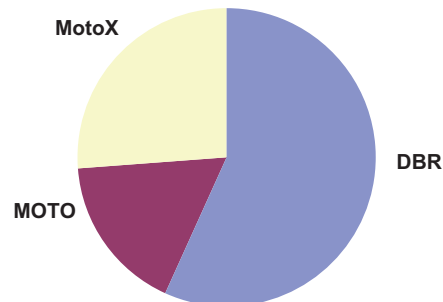
"From a rider's point of view I've just got to ride the best I can and if I end up beating Shaun from now until the des Nations then I think they'll have to think again. If Shaun's beating me from now until then he deserves his slot – that's the way I see it."

PUKKAPIES!

HEARTY HELPING FOR DBR

Everyone loves a nice slice of pie and at DBR we're a bunch of big-boned blokes so naturally we like our portions to be on the large side!

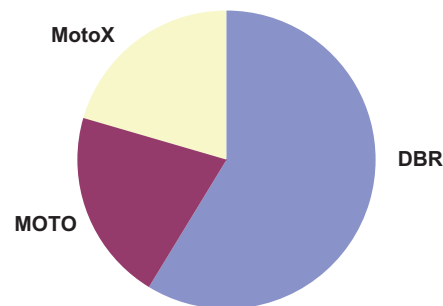
Lucky for us then that we're getting a super-sized helping of the latest UK MX mag sales pie-chart based on WHS News Wholesale market share estimates.



WHS News Wholesale are the industry main players when it comes to calculating magazine sales in the UK and the latest pie-chart is based on their figures for the issues of DBR, Moto and MotoX that went on sale in the second week of May.

Obviously, we have the actual sales figure for DBR but to keep things fair we wanted to use exactly the same data used to estimate Moto and MotoX sales. And the data that's been baked into this particular pie comes straight from Seymour – the company that handles our distribution as well as the distribution for Moto and MotoX – so there's no bias involved.

And just to prove it's no one-off and that we're by far and away Britain's biggest-selling dirt bike magazine here's another tasty pie-chart showing the average market share for 2007.



So if you're an advertiser aiming to get maximum exposure for your product or a reader looking for the nation's favourite dirt bike mag there's no contest. The facts are in front of you and we challenge anyone to say otherwise...



BEST OF BRITISH #2!

DOUGIE LEADS TdN TEAM

The same weekend as the MXdN takes place at Donington Park, Britain's top feet-up stars will be battling for world honours at the Trial des Nations at La Rabassa in Andorra.

Our men's team is a mixture of experience and young contenders led by multiple world champion Dougie Lampkin and Graham Jarvis with James Dabill and Michael Brown riding shotgun. The British ladies' team – the defending women's champions – has been selected along the lines of if it ain't broke don't fix it and comprises Becky Cook, Maria Conway and Donna Fox.

ACU trials and enduro committee chairman John Collins is hoping for a big upset this year – and is optimistic for the future. "While the women's team are the favourites for their event I'm sure the men's team will be hoping to deliver a huge shock to red hot favourites Spain who can boast six riders in the top 10 of the world championship," says John. "Last year's third place behind Spain and Japan was disappointing and we are hoping for improvement."

"With the strength of our younger competitors on the world and European stage we may soon be challenging the dominance of Spain on the world stage."

British champ
Billy Mac keeps his
wee tootsies safe in
a pair of TCX Pro 2s



BOOTIFUL!

TCX UNVEIL '09 RANGE IN VENICE

Q: What have Billy Mac, Steve Ramon, Ivan Cervantes, Cyril Despres and a pirate got in common? **A:** They're all employed by TCX.

Admittedly, the captain of the Jolly Roger – the ocean-going venue for the Venice launch of the Italian boot manufacturer's 2009 range – isn't paid to race in TCX's products (although he managed a neat block pass on a gondola). But the fact that the other four – plus the likes of Marc De Reuver, Stephen Frossard and Johnny Aubert – all entrust their tootsies to TCX speaks volumes for the protection offered by the company formally known as Oxtar.

The majority of TCX's lines are designed for

Tarmac shredding but there's also a healthy choice of off-road hoof-holders with the top-of-the-range Pro 2 setting the standard for protection, comfort and innovation. Weighing in at £274.99, the Pro 2 comes with a removable inner bootie and TCX's trademarked Torsion Control System – specially adapted for off-road use – that allows movement of the ankle but prevents twisting beyond natural limits to protect the joint.

The new-for-2009 Comp 2 offers the same technology as the Pro 2 including TCS, reinforced heel, shin pads, ankle and ankle bone protection but comes without an inner bootie and

also included in the TCX range is the more budget-conscious Dune, the youth Comp Kid and Terrain 2 trials boot.

Part of the launch involved a trip to the factory and the chance to talk to the brains behind the boots and what really stood out was the passion TCX have for their products. Quality control is stringent in every aspect of the manufacturing process and this attention to detail is evident in the finished product.

For more on the range of TCX boots go to www.tcxboots.com or check out UK importer Nevis Marketing's website at www.nevism.co.uk

BID! BID! BID! BID!

TCX PRO 2S UP FOR GRABS

In the hands – or rather on the feet – of CAS Monster Honda's Billy MacKenzie the TCX Pro 2s are the fastest footwear in British motocross and we've teamed up with UK importers Nevis Marketing to offer one lucky reader the chance to get a pair of their very own worth a whopping £274.99.

We've set up a reverse auction and all you have to do is text in what you're prepared to pay for them with the **LOWEST UNIQUE BID** getting the boots – so you could end up buying a pair of top-quality MX boots for as little as 1p! Remember, the lowest unique bid wins...

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Choose the amount you want to bid in pence. Start your text message with the word **DBRTCX** followed by a space, then your bid in pence eg 150 (this means you are submitting a bid for £1.50), then another space followed by your name and postcode. Your message should look something like this **DBRTCX 150 JOHN SMITH LS1 1RF**.

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GORDON CROCKARD

SUMMER HOLIDAY!

OKAY, SO HE AIN'T TOURING EUROPE IN A DOUBLE DECKER BUS BUT THE CROCK STAR'S BACK FROM THE STATES FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttly

I'm home for the summer break as the GNCC series takes July and August off as the weather gets a little too hot for three-hour races. I've been looking forward to getting back here for a number of reasons and I'm making good use of my time here while I've got it.

The last GNCC was at the start of July and I left the US on the Monday after the race to fly to Belfast, arriving in on Tuesday afternoon. Wednesday morning I flew over to Liverpool and drove down to Wales to race the evening motocross at Rhayader. It poured with rain all day and I was scrap with jetlag too but I had expected that and was quite impressed with how I was managing. I hadn't rode any sort of MX track since summer 2007 but I soon got into the swing of it and ended up finishing second to my PAR Honda team-mate Ray Rowson.

My BMW contract in the States allows me to compete on any machinery in any race outside of the States. So for the MX races I'll do for the rest of this season I will be on a PAR Honda. Team owner Paul Rowlands has given me a fantastic opportunity to ride for his team and my idea is to reward him with some honourable results in the races I'll do on his bikes. Geoff Davies is preparing the race bikes for me and mechanicing on race day too and Steve Clitheroe is tuning the motors.

After the wet evening event at Rhayader I flew back over to Belfast the next day and got ready to test and practice. On this occasion it was on yellow machinery for the locally based Bodytech Suzuki Team. This came about by team manger Rolly Sutor asking me back in November if I would be interested in doing some races for his team. He was aware of my flexible BMW contract and we agreed to do some Irish and Ulster races.

On a 450 I rode a round of the Irish champs at Dundalk finishing second and the next day, on the Northern Irish public holiday Monday, I raced the Suzuki again in an Ulster championship at Seaford. I had two wins and a front wheel puncture in the last race of the day. Thank you to all the sponsors, Kenny Smith for mechanicing, Rolly Sutor, Rick Sutor team owner and Bridgestone tyres for hooking me up.

The Bodytech Suzuki races were great fun

but now any MX races I will do in 2008 will be on a PAR Honda. I came over to England and raced at Blaxhall Pits in an MMX championship the following weekend. All went okay and I was second in the first moto and fourth in the second moto. I had shocking arm pump in the first race and to be honest I was low on energy all weekend, probably due to not actually taking two minutes break at all since returning from the US and just totally ignoring jetlag. In the second moto I got ran out to the first turn outside fence and came round ninth but moved up to fourth at the flag. The track was awesome rough and I loved it.

On the Saturday when I was walking the track I met a guy who seemed quite a happy chappy. His conversation opening question was "so, did you make lots of money in America?" – I kind of was a bit pissed at him asking me such a direct personal question which really was none of his business. So I simply said "I made some" and then asked him if he made lots of money at his job. The conversation didn't go much further!

After Blaxhall Pits I got some practice done to try and be closer to the pace for the Foxhill the next weekend. I guess people don't know it but I hadn't been on a MX track from last August to the first week of July this year. All my GNCC racing and practising has been in the woods and totally different to MX.

Foxhill is somewhere with a lot of big memories and it was awesome to have a British championship there again. Good starts are crucial and be willing to eat roost if you don't holeshot. I had an eighth and a sixth – no holeshots and plenty of roost eating. Man, I was furious in the second moto. Livid! At one point I think I was 19th. Just all the usual bad start agenda. The room for improvement in that department is huge but it was cool to have a decent crowd of spectators.

Brampton in Cumbria is the next British and I intend to be there for that one. The Irish GP at Fairy House in Dublin is another race that I'll do. I'm looking forward to it and I hope the sun shines all weekend bringing all the Paddys out in all their glory.



SUPERFAN!

IS DAVE LOWCOCK BRITISH MX'S MOST FANATICAL SUPPORTER?

Words and photo by Nick Haskell

When it comes to motocross fans there are few more recognisable than 44-year-old MX nut Dave Lowcock. A structural engineer from Locks Heath in Southampton, Dave's been a regular at motocross events for more than three decades and his interest in the sport has carried him across much of Europe – and helped him amass a huge collection of MX memorabilia.

Dave attended his first GP in 1977 at Farleigh Castle and from that memorable day onwards the then 13-year-old Dave was hooked. The following season he began competing as a schoolboy with the Portsmouth MCR club – where he eventually attained Expert status – before a switch to the AMCA through the Havant and Waterlooville club. He finally hung up his boots for good at the end of the '94 season after

competing in both motocross and enduros through Tony Ford and the Southern Motocross Club.

For those old enough to remember the pictures from the final round of the world championship in Switzerland in 1985 when Dave Thorpe clinched the first of his three 500cc world MX titles, Dave was the man holding the 'King David' banner in the background. He was there again the following year with a modified banner when DT clinched the second of his titles in that rain-soaked final meeting in Luxembourg.

During his long presence on the international scene Dave has become friends with many of the top riders. He's been fortunate enough to have attended four of Stefan Everts' world championship parties and while living and working in southern Holland he celebrated his

40th birthday with a party that was attended by his many MX friends including Ben Townley. He remained in Holland until 2006 when family commitments brought him back to the UK.

In '85 having won his first world title, DT gave Dave a pair of his Yoko race pants as a memento and this generous gesture kicked off his collection that now numbers 67 race shirts, 11 pairs of race pants and four crash helmets from many of the top GP stars. Everts, Cairoli, Thorpe, Coppins, Philippaerts, Townley, De Dycker, Dobb, Smets, MacKenzie and Searle are just a few of the top men who have all contributed to his collection.

And although he already has one – plus a pair of his race pants – Dave's aim is to collect another of Stefan Everts #72 shirts when he finally reaches the 72nd shirt mark!

AMCAUPDATE

SAUNDERS AND MERCER SET THE PACE

Words and photo by Mike Wood

With three rounds down of the 2008 AMCA MX championships it's Kawasaki power leading the way in both classes as Ben Saunders tops the MX1 charts while 'Factory' Phil Mercer is the MX2 pacesetter.

In a very competitive MX1 division Saunders has so far won four motos with AMCA legend and comeback king Gary Davies having a couple of victories to his name. David Campbell and triple AMCA MX2 champ Brad O'Leary – in his first season on the 450s – share a win apiece.

Three contrasting sets of conditions have resulted in three different series leaders with Campbell excelling in the Cleobury mudbath and Davies enjoying a dry, slick Condover circuit before Saunders moved gracefully to the top of the table after the latest round on a superbly prepared Bevercotes track. Although only a fool would bet against one of the current top four of Saunders, Davies, O'Leary or Campbell claiming the eventual crown, they can certainly afford no slip ups with the equally consistent Charlie Hollis, Clinton Barrs and Tom Fish hot on their heels.

In MX2 a very focussed Phil Mercer has recorded five out of eight moto wins and has never finished outside the top two places in his other races to put himself in pole for the title. But although in the driving seat, Phil's well aware of the fact that his consistency is currently being shadowed by young Lee Dunham. With Mercer on a mission, the only other riders to beat him to the chequered flag



Lee Dunham chases Phil Mercer

are Lee Payne and Owen Delaney. While Payne has already displayed some blistering speed to win two races he will certainly need to find more consistency in his results in the remaining five rounds if he is to upset Mercer and Dunham.

SERIESSTANDINGS

MX1

1	Ben Saunders	(Delkevic Kawasaki)	170 points
2	Gary Davies	(Cradley Kawasaki)	156
3	Brad O'Leary	(AMS KTM)	150
4	David Campbell	(Honda)	144
5	Charlie Hollis	(Mission Control Honda)	133

MX2

1	Phil Mercer	(Delkevic Kawasaki)	191 points
2	Lee Dunham	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	164
3	Lee Payne	(RC Yamaha)	141
4	Matt Porter	(Select Homes Honda)	117
5	Shaun Frayne	(Honda)	98



SUPERSMITH!

WAYNE RETAINS MMX CROWN

Photo by Toby Fuller

Pioneer Emberson Yamaha's Wayne Smith retained his British Open championship one round early with a solid – and savvy – performance at Blaxhall Pits.

The defending four-stroke champ rode safe and went 4-2 at the penultimate round of the rebranded series which attracted wildcard rides from Brad Anderson and Gordon Crockard.

In the Under 21 class series leader Alex Snow took a gate-to-flag win in the opening moto but a mistake second time out pushed him back to third behind CCM's Kristian Whatley and Shane Carless.

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STEPHEN SWORD

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS!

THE MONTH STARTS BADLY FOR SWORDY BUT ENDS ON A HIGH WITH A DOUBLE WIN AT FOXHILL

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sully

What can I say about this month? It started on such a low and has ended on such a high! I had to come to terms with the fact that I had to miss not only Germany but Sweden also which was a massive blow to me. I tried to ride just before Sweden but my shoulder was still hurting and once again I had to make the decision to ride at only 80 per cent of my potential and risk having an ongoing problem with the joint for the foreseeable future or miss the GP which would give me two weeks off ready for South Africa. By making the decision to wait for South Africa I would be 100 per cent injury free so that's what I did.

Throughout the two weeks I mainly trained at the gym building up my muscle on the shoulder to make it strong again to be able to ride. I also did a lot of mountainbike riding which Dr Claes suggested I do – this helped me to see when I would be able to get back on the bike. On the Tuesday before South Africa I went on the bike and I felt good considering I had not been riding for three weeks so I was feeling ready for the racing.

We arrived in South Africa after a long and bloody hot flight – the air con wasn't working at the back of the plane and where was I? Yep, at the back! At one point we were told that the temperature got to 28 degrees! When I arrived at the track there were loads of people taking pictures so Jodie being nosey wanted to see what was going on. I couldn't believe it – there were three hippos bathing in the river. We were told not to get too close as they are the biggest killers in SA and that was enough for me to get in the car and go!

The track was good and I was eager to get out and ride so when Saturday came I was ready. The qualifying race went well I came third behind Tyla – I felt I rode tight but that is to be expected and as the race wore on I relaxed and felt good. On Sunday the first race was hard. I got out the gate great but then Cairoli's wheel slid out and hit mine which ended with me on the ground. I got going and ended up 10th – as you can imagine I was pretty stressed as I needed points but I was happy with the way I

was riding and came through.

The second race I was around sixth into the first corner, however I crashed on the first lap which put me back to last once again. I managed to make my way back up to 13th which made me 10th overall on the day. This was disappointing for me as I thought I would be able to gain more points. Then after that we missed our flight back home as our connecting flight was so delayed. Luckily we were able to board the next flight to the UK which departed an hour after our original flight. So we all boarded and got back with air con!

I was really looking forward to Foxhill – it's such a great track and brought back memories of how it use to be when GPs were held there. It was such a great turnout and the track was prepared brilliantly. The first race I got the holeshot but was passed by Simpson so I stayed on him and passed him back to take the win. In the second moto I was second out the gate but stayed with Simpson the whole race and on the last lap he crashed so I again took the race win. The crowd were great and I was so pleased with the support I received from them all.

I enjoyed being on the top step of the podium and with all my family there to watch made it even better. From being nine points down I'm now three off the lead so it's going to be a good championship to the end!

This week I am staying focused and training hard ready for the next GP in Belgium this weekend. As always I am about to mow the lawn – until you have laid it, fed it and spent so many hours maintaining it the way I have you can never understand what it feels like when your dogs kill it with their wee. Seriously, I am going to kill them or if anyone wants two dogs let me know! God I will be in trouble if Jodie reads this! My trainer Dave Thorpe is racing the veteran championship also so fingers crossed for him that he will do well and we can both come away after Sunday happy with the day.

That's all for this month – have a good one...

Braaap #7



TREY CANARD

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Trey Canard



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IT MAY BE TOUGH AT THE TOP BUT IT'S EVEN TOUGHER WHEN YOU HAVE TO BUY YOUR OWN BIKES, PAY FOR YOUR OWN DIESEL AND TAKE A FERRY TO EVERY RACE...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

Every motocross rider dreams of riding for one of the factories or at the very least a team big enough to be able to supply competitive bikes and maybe even a wage. The reality for 99 per cent of us is that it isn't going to happen but that doesn't stop the privateers doing their best to live the dream.

DBR: Introduce yourself for us.

LK: "My name is Luke Kennett, I'm 23 years old and I live on the Isle of Wight."

DBR: What's your day job?

LK: "I'm a full-time bricklayer."

DBR: How long have you been riding motocross?

LK: "I had my first bike at five but didn't start racing until I was eight on the 60s, riding at the local club. When I was 10 I started riding 80s at the Portsmouth club where I did most of my youth racing."

DBR: What bike do you ride?

LK: "This season I've ridden all of the British championship rounds on a CR250 two-stroke but I sold the 250 and bought a CRF450 which I'm using for the first time this weekend. Financially the two-stroke makes better sense and it's more fun to ride but at my level I'm fighting a losing battle with the top boys anyway so I have to try and give myself every advantage I can. I also have a CR125 that I ride in the DEP series."

DBR: Do you have any sponsors?

LK: "I have Wight Link, the Isle of Wight ferry company – they've been really good to me. For the last four years they've given me full discount on 25 ferry crossings per year which covers all my races in the season. It costs £120 a time to get the camper on the boat so that's the only reason I can get to the races. In return I have their logo on the van, on my shirt and bike and every month I have to write a report for them, letting them know how I'm getting on. My girlfriend's dad has a plant hire company and he's also been helping me out a lot."

DBR: How much does it cost you to race per season?

LK: "Well there's about 8k on the bikes to start with and the price of fuel means that it cost us £160 in diesel to get to Lyng! I'd say that there isn't much change from about 22-25 grand a season."

DBR: What is it that motivates you?

LK: "You start off at club level and when you're winning you've got to go the next step up. Next it's the U21s and it's like 'wow this is massive', then once you've raced at a full British it's like 'this is where I've got to be'. Once you've raced the best that's where you want to be."

DBR: What's the biggest differences between your bike and, say, TC's or Ando's?

LK: "The power on the 450s is massive so I don't think it's the engines, I'd say it has to be the suspension."

DBR: Do you get to practice and train much during the week?

LK: "Since the GP track closed there's nowhere to practice on the island so for me it would mean taking a day off work, losing a day's pay, paying for the ferry – all in it would cost me about £300 so it just doesn't happen. Physically I will train about three times a week mixing up squash, cycling and circuit training. It's hard to fit everything in as I've usually raced the previous weekend leaving only the evenings to get the bike and gear cleaned ready for the next weekend as well as going to work and training!"

DBR: At a round of the British championship what result would you be happy with?

LK: "To come away with points so top 20 really."

DBR: Do you travel to the races in a RS motorhome?

LK: "Well, before this season it's always been out of a Sprinter van but this year my parents bought this Kentucky motorhome – without my mum and dad I'd

probably be out the back of a Transit! It's funny when we were in the Sprinter you'd look around the paddock and think 'I wish we were in that Kentucky', now I look out at the KRMs and RSs and wish we were in one of those – the grass always looks greener!"

DBR: Do you do all the work on your bike or do you have a mechanic?

LK: "No dad does most of the work, he doesn't really let me touch them! If there's anything major then we send them to Keith Thorpe. Keith has always done my bikes – whenever I get a new bike it goes to him for a complete strip down first."

DBR: Do any of the series pay prize/start money?

LK: "Prize money for where I'm finishing? No! If you can crack the top 20 then yes, there is prize money. In the DEP I think it's the top six who earn but I'm hovering at about eighth!"

DBR: What's the best result you've ever had?

LK: "In the DEP it's been a sixth overall and in the British it's been a 17th."

DBR: Growing up who were your motocross heroes?

LK: "Growing up it was definitely Dave Thorpe – as a kid I was always watching my dad's videos."

DBR: And who are they now? Thorpe's a legend but he's a pretty old school hero for a young man...

LK: "Carmichael and Everts I'd say, they are the guys who have been there and done it."

DBR: When you are sat on the starting gate what's running through your mind?

LK: "I'm just thinking that I have to get a good start. Once the 15-second board comes out all the nerves change to aggression and excitement – it's difficult to explain."

DBR: Which is your favourite track and why?

LK: "Well it was the GP track on the Isle of Wight which is annoying as it's only 10 minutes from my house! Now I think it's probably here at Foxhill."

DBR: How do you see your motocross career panning out?

LK: "My girlfriend and I are due to have a baby soon so things are going to change. I'd like to think I could carry on at this level for two or three more years and then maybe just do the British Open or DEP series."

DBR: How much of your income goes on your motocross career?

LK: "Well it's not just mine, there's my girlfriend's, my mum and dad's... It's well over half, there's not a great deal left at the end of the month. I'm just glad my girlfriend likes motocross or I think I'd be down the road!"

DBR: Are there any people you would like to thank?

LK: "Yes please. My mum and dad, my girlfriend Jade, Jade's parents, my sister and her fiancé Neville Bradshaw, Keith Thorpe for sorting my bikes out and Wight Link who have been a massive help."



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TEAM!

KTM UK'S JAMES NOBLE AND SHAUN SIMPSON COME CLEAN ABOUT OILING FILTERS, HEDGEROW WILDIES AND BEING SCARED OF MUSHROOMS...

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

This month we catch up with KTM UK's James Noble and current British championship MX2 red plate holder Shaun Simpson at a hot as hell Foxhill. It's been a dream week for Shaun – not only has he been picked for the British des Nations team, he's also landed a spot in this month's Mano o Mano. It just doesn't get any better!

DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?

JN: "Steve McQueen – only because he does that great big jump in The Great Escape!"

SS: "Steve McQueen."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

JN: "That was Wednesday and I did three actually – although I have to say I normally have pre-oiled ones but I'd run out!"

SS: "I've been slacking a bit on the old practice bike lately, I'd say it's two to three weeks ago."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

JN: "I wouldn't have a clue...I know where the valves are but not how to check them."

SS: "Yes I would."

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

JN: "Yeah, a rabbit that I shot."

SS: "No I haven't."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

JN: "I broke my tib and fib but apart from that it's just been sprains and twists and things."

SS: "This might take some time. I've broken my elbow, thumb, wrist, collarbone three times, smashed my foot up bad, my fib, some ribs, punctured my lung and dislocated my shoulder twice!"

DBR: How many and where are your tattoos?

JN: "I've got 'Natalie' my wife on one arm, 'Freya' my daughter on the other and 'Elliott' my boy on my chest."

SS: "I haven't got any."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

JN: "Oh you gotta do, yeah."

SS: "I'd go in thinking 'I'm going to take this whatever the cost' but I wouldn't try and put him down – but if he has to go down, he has to go down."

DBR: What car do you drive?

JN: "Mercedes Vito van."

SS: "Volkswagen Golf."

DBR: If money was no object what car would you drive?

JN: "Aston Martin."

SS: "Something pretty trick like a BMW M3."

DBR: What's your favourite food?

JN: "Indian."

SS: "Indian."

DBR: If you weren't a motocrosser what would you be?

JN: "Probably a digger driver building tracks. My dad's got some plant and I'll always get out and try to build something new."

SS: "I would say I would most probably be a motocross mechanic."

DBR: Which is your favourite track?

JN: "Isle of Wight GP track."

SS: "Isle of Wight definitely, it's a real nice track."

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?

JN: "I'd like to go skiing but Natalie likes hot holidays so when we go I try and keep busy with things like jet skiing."

SS: "I don't mind whether it's a hot or cold holiday as long as it's got some action and adventure involved."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

JN: "It was probably at my sister's 18th – I was only 16 at the time and it was the first time I'd been drunk. I got up, staggered to the front and started to make a speech about my sister...then I was sick in the taxi on the way home!"

SS: "I managed to get a bit drunk last year and I thought to myself 'what are you doing, you need to go for a run'. So off I went and managed to get lost for two hours and nobody knew where I was!"

DBR: What's your best pick-up line?

JN: "I haven't got a pick-up line...I've been with my missus since I was 15!"

SS: "Hi, I'm a motocross rider! No, no I'm joking honestly! I don't really have a pick-up line."

DBR: How many sit-ups can you do?

JN: "Well Coppins said three lots of 30 so I'll say three lots of 31!"

SS: "I don't know, probably 70 maybe – at a push!"

DBR: How long would you have to be seeing someone before you cut the cheese in her presence?

JN: "Oh I just wouldn't do that!"

SS: "That depends on how much I needed to fart! I'd probably do it on the first date just to get it out of the way."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

JN: "Yeah, dying!"

SS: "No...unless you count mushrooms!"

DBR: Where is the craziest place you've had to answer nature's call during your travels?

JN: "Well it's not really crazy but I've had to jump into a hedge while out running and it wasn't for a p'ss either!"

SS: "I've had to do that a couple of times as well – lost a couple of socks over that!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

JN: "The kids and the wife."

SS: "At the moment it's the red plate."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

JN: "Brunette."

SS: "Brunette."

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?

JN: "That would probably be Austria in '02 when I finished fifth. I got a rubbish start and came from way back. I was happy with that."

SS: "This year in Bulgaria. The last couple of laps were something else."

DBR: Ever been in a fight and if so did you win?

JN: "Yes but I didn't win!"

SS: "Only one when I was at school. One punch and it was all over – I threw the punch by the way!"

DBR: How fast can you down a pint?

JN: "Not very fast I wouldn't think."

SS: "Actually pretty fast. One of my mates had a yard of ale and I think I drank it in something like 11 seconds!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

JN: "Oohhh, uummm, oohhhh...no!"

SS: "It depends on the race – and the woman!"

DBR: Tell us something about yourself that no-one else knows?

JN: "I had a PW80 and they wouldn't let me ride it in the 60cc class that I was normally in so I lined up for the 80s. It was pretty wet and I ended up getting lapped three times – in a five-lap race!"

SS: "I left school with 8 GCSEs – four As, three Bs and a C."

mano o mano



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Team USA have an all-Kawasaki line-up for the 2008 Motocross of Nations, with James Stewart, Ryan Villopoto and Tim Ferry carrying the Stars and Stripes - as AMA Team USA goes for its 19th Nations victory!

But, British heroes Billy Mackenzie and Tommy Searle could have a pivotal role in upsetting their ideal, and keep an eye on the likes of Toni Cairoli who made a winning move into MX1 on this course at last year's Grand Prix. Steve Ramen, Sebastien Pourcel and now David Philippaerts, should also be among the front runners in what is arguably the sport's most prestigious event.

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Wayne Garrett scored both times out at Foxhill and will race the Irish GP



FAIRY NUFF!

IN JUST A FEW WEEKS TIME THE BEST MX RIDERS ON THE PLANET WILL GO HEAD-TO-HEAD AT THE IRISH GP – AND OUR MAN IN THE EMERALD ISLE'S JUST A TAD EXCITED...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

It's nearly here people! On August 30/31 the much-awaited Irish GP at the ultra-modern Fairy House facility, just 20 miles from Dublin city centre, will see the world's best riders banging bars and scraping plastic!

If I had to go out on a limb I guess my money has to be on David Philippaerts in MX1 – the championship leader (at time of writing) has continued to prove his worth this season by scoring no less than nine podium finishes so far. The Irish track will be kind to Philippaerts who confesses that his riding style is more suited to the hardpack – and the Irish track will certainly be hardpack.

Current champion Steve Ramon has already won races this season and is determined to retain the crown he won last season without a single moto win. The Belgian Suzuki rider prefers sandy going but has got a point to prove so don't rule him out of the game just yet.

The eternal bridesmaid and possibly the most friendly guy in the GP paddock – Josh Coppins – has not had the best of seasons so far. Battling injury from the start of the season, Josh has managed to keep his Yamaha in contention for the title that was all but his last season before a crash smashed the Kiwi's dreams yet again.

Flying the flag for Scotland will be Billy MacKenzie. CAS Honda's main man has yet to show his best this season – he's led races but made silly mistakes. Billy damaged his shoulder in the French GP and while still winning every British championship race he has started, GP racing is another level up.

And what about the Irish riders I hear you ask? A certain Mr Gordon Crockard has been back on a summer break from GNCC duties in the USA. Since his return the Crock Star has taken in several local and UK motocross events. I enjoyed watching him at the recent Ulster championship at Seaford. Gordon was there with his mum and dad and seeing that family unit working out of a van took me back to the good old days. Anyway, GC smoked two motos before a technical problem with his borrowed machinery called time on a hat-trick.

The talk is that GC will ride the Irish GP. Will he score points? Will he qualify? Qualification may be difficult as riding GNCC races that last for hours on end has had an effect on Gordon's once legendary race pace which is the key to qualifying in GPs. But you can be sure of two things – GC will be working flat out on fast laps and, if he makes it to the startgate, he'll get stronger as the laps run down.

The MX2 class is now officially WFO! The KTM 'Brit Pack' of Tommy Searle and Shaun Simpson have been on fire all year and have one man less to beat since Tony Cairoli picked up a season-ending injury. But points leader Tyla Rattray, it must be said, is vastly more experienced and has collected many moto wins in his quest for GP glory. Still, wouldn't it be great to see Shaun Simpson win in Ireland?

Martin Barr is also on the 'riding injured' list but is more than capable of scoring points if he can get through the Saturday qualifiers. Although not yet confirmed who

is riding in which class, Moto-One by TAS Suzuki riders Wayne Garrett and Graeme Irwin have been entered. Southern centre riders Stuart Edmonds and Ross Brown will also take to the world stage – it's a big jump in class for the pair but to take part in your home GP is an honour. And remember, there's racing Saturday and Sunday – your support is essential.

Now for some British championship news. There's not a lot happening here to be honest but Marty Barr is keeping his hand on a podium finish and with two rounds remaining the U-TAG Yamaha rider is currently in third place and is hoping for a strong finish in the ultra-competitive MX2 class.

Graeme Irwin has scored enough points to rank 24th so far – a top 20 finish in his rookie season would give the youngster a solid building block for 2009. Wayne Garrett scored 17-18 place finishes at the famously fast Foxhill circuit near Swindon while GC recorded 8-6 scores – not what we would have expected from the ex-World champion. As stated above, GNCC is about endurance – not short, sharp motocross motos – so it will take a while for GC to get back into the swing of things.

With two rounds remaining the Ulster MX2 championship is turning into a three-horse race with only six points separating the championship protagonists. CCM Motorcycles-sponsored Stu Edmonds is the filling in a Moto-One by TAS sandwich – that's Irwin on 250 points, Edmonds on 248 and Garrett on 244. Even with a DNF, Irwin's five wins make him the punters' choice while Stuart and Wayne may just have an edge if consistency comes into play as the pressure mounts during the final six motos.

At the halfway point of the Irish championship it's looking like this in MX1. Defending champ Wayne Garrett is leading the pack on 218 points while RS Freight pilot Richard Bird is second on 188 with Edmonds rounding out the top three on 177. The Irish MX2 championship is another Garrett and Irwin affair with the youngster holding a 12-point lead over his stablemate. Philip Loughlin's Kawasaki is in third position at this point.

The Mini Motorcycle Club of Ireland have announced that they will run mini supermoto races in conjunction with their mini moto events. Both minibike supermoto and motocross is on the rise with a successful British championship growing in stature over the past few years. For information on where and when you can have a go at this exciting form of racing call John on 028 30821585 or visit www.streetfighterracing.com

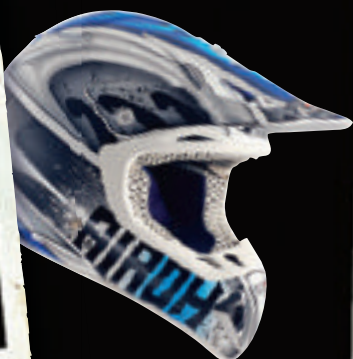
Finally, a quick 'take it easy' to the voice of Irish motocross Mr Roy Neill and also a 'get well soon' to young Thomas O'Grady, the promising GOMX/Mulligan Contractor Yamaha rider who broke his elbow and will be out of action for the remainder of the season.

Stevie

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"MX2 is tough, as hard as it gets. constant jarring and jolting putting load's of strain and stress on your neck, you're right at the limit for forty minutes at a stretch. I give it everything – so I expect my equipment to give me everything too. That's why I go for Airoh Stelt, Possibly the lightest MX helmet in the world, and really comfortable too.

I forget I'm wearing it –
I just get on with the job."

Tommy Searle
Top British rider, MX2 Championship



For Johnny Aubert the next two months may well be torture

THE WAITING GAME...

WITH TWO MONTHS TO KILL UNTIL THE WEC SERIES CONTINUES JONTY TAKES A LOOK AT WHO'S DOING WHAT AND WHATNOT

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

Between July 27 and September 27 the 2008 World Enduro Championship stops. With six of the eight rounds completed and just four days of competition remaining those involved in the WEC must play a waiting game that for many will prove long and frustrating.

Offering time to rest, time to think, time to heal and time to improve, for one rider it will be an eight-week period in which he will think only of one thing. Johnny Aubert the – UFO Corse Yamaha rider who currently leads the Enduro 2 world championship and is probably headed towards his first ever world title – will be able to think of nothing other than the upcoming GP of Italy. The most important race of his life so far.

The reason the GP of Italy is so important to Aubert is because if history repeats itself he will fall short of his life-long goal of becoming a world champion while his arch rival Juha Salminen will collect title number eight. For the past two years Johnny has failed to finish his team's home round of the WEC and knows that he seems to be jinxed when it comes to finishing both days of the GP of Italy. This year he has to finish both days and he has to perform well in order to keep Salminen behind him.

In deciding not to compete in this year's ISDE – to instead focus 100 per cent on his WEC preparations – Johnny has publicly shown just how much he wants to win the E2 championship. Knowing that he can ill afford any costly mistakes come September 27-28, Johnny has two months to train harder than ever to ensure he is able to realise his dream because if he

makes it through the penultimate round of the series without problems Johnny is as good as world champion.

For others the two-month break allows time to look much further ahead than the GP of Italy and the end of the '08 WEC series. For some this quiet time between rounds six and seven allows time for expansion. For BMW's factory enduro team it allows time to move into a new state-of-the-art, purpose-built workshop facility while also getting themselves set for '09.

BMW are without question starting to see their efforts over the past 18 months come to fruition with team rider Simo Kirssi claiming his – and the team's – first WEC win in recent months while the team's bikes continue to grow increasingly competitive and reliable. But the \$64,000 question is can they win a world title in '09?

Venturing into the World Enduro Championship for the first time in '07, the German manufacturers spent their first year testing, testing and testing some more and showed that they were serious about their future plans and ambitions in the WEC. This year they have continued to build the solid platform from which they hope to launch their serious title assault on the WEC in '09.

With several of the world's best riders rumoured to be finalising contracts with BMW for next year it seems that the German giants might well be able to go from WEC newcomers to championship winners in just three years. If they do it will be a highly impressive feat. If they don't they will undoubtedly make life a lot harder for a

number of the series' premier teams than they have to date.

But you can be sure that KTM – the WEC superpower of recent seasons – won't take things lying down. With championship successes having come relatively easily to the Austrian firm during the past few seasons, when BMW step up their plans KTM will do the same. The result of the Austro-German scrap will add more interest and make the '09 WEC series even more exciting.

The first ever Indoor Enduro World Championship is something that many riders and teams are starting to think seriously about even though the series isn't scheduled to start until early November. Upgraded by the FIM from a World Cup to a world championship, the fact that Spanish company RPM are now the official promoters of the series should be a good thing.

I say should be as no-one really knows what direction the series will now take. Will it become increasingly polished? Will the series appeal to a global TV audience? Will any of the events even get televised? Or will unifying half-a-dozen or so indoor events so they all follow the same set of rules and come together under one championship banner really matter?

The hope is that it will matter and that RPM will take the sport of indoor enduro to a higher level and to a wider audience. There's no doubting that the sport provides some of the most exciting indoor motorsport action there is and, as has been shown in the States, when promoted professionally indoor enduro racing can compliment the outdoor game perfectly.



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Wayne Smith - Pioneer Yamaha remains a real challenger in the title fight, and really improved his chances with a round win at Desertmartin.

We are pleased to be able to give DBR readers the chance to win Wayne's race shirt, plus £100 worth of Fuchs Silkolene oil.

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FOXHILL FAN #1



One word! Foxhill! I was so excited when this awesome track was put forward for the British GP earlier in the year I almost papped myself – and then I was almost in tears when it became clear that the world's best racers weren't heading back there after an absence of eight years. And then my mate's husband told me there was going to be a Maxxis round there! Talk about an emotional rollercoaster!

Anyway, to cut a long story short I rolled up first thing Sunday morning and apart from some track alterations on the top at the far side – and the fact the sun was shining and it wasn't p****ing down – it was like being transported back to 2000. I've got so many great memories of the place – I went to all the GPs there in the '90s as well as quite a few other big meetings and the MXdN. Does anyone remember Jason Higgs leading Joel Smets there in a round of the Shell Advance series? And what about Mike Healey tearing up and down the hills on a KTM.

But I'm getting sidetracked! What I really wrote in to say was big congratulations to the organisers for doing such a good job with the watering and track preparation – they've proved that Foxhill still has a future when it comes to major MX meetings. Maybe Youthstream could be persuaded that GPs should be about the track, not about the infrastructure and world championship racing could return to the best circuit in the world?

Emily, Brighton

No-one would be happier than us to see another British GP at Foxhill – after what happened in Y2K it feels like there's unfinished business – but unless there's a dramatic about turn in the criteria for GPs it's simply never going to happen again...

LOW PROFILE

If you ever watch the news they talk about every sport under the sun except motocross and I would like to know why! Motocross gets absolutely no publicity except from T+MX and this awesome mag in Britain.

If you were to ask about 90 per cent of the British public who Billy MacKenzie or Tommy Searle are they wouldn't know – I mean when Billy won the British championship last year he didn't even get a mention on the local news (Edinburgh and the Lothians) and that's where he lives!

Mark, Edinburgh

We totally agree Mark. MX doesn't get anything like the national exposure it deserves and it never will unless it becomes more mainstream which is pretty unlikely unless someone like Prince Harry takes it up...

FOXHILL FAN #2

Awesome! That's all I can say about Foxhill. What a stunning track – the best one I've been to in England so far. We need to use it more! A big thank you to all the guys at DBR and Silkolene for such a great prize – we got treated really well, I got to meet Billy Mac and the Crock Star and I got loads of autographs! The weather was fantastic and the racing was fantastic. Good day all round!

I was just wondering if you would be doing any posters soon! Some with Tiff maybe as I've not had any to put up near my work bench for a long time!

Marc, Suffolk

There are plans for a poster in the not too distant future but whether it will be Tiff, some bloke on a bike or a waxed and oiled Sully in a thong hasn't been decided yet!

FOXHILL FAN #3

I just want to congratulate Swordy and Billy Mac for their double wins at round six of the Maxxis championship at Foxhill. I would also like to say well done to Shaun for putting in 100 per cent effort and grabbing the holeshot twice but failing to keep it – and what bad luck when he led the whole second race, then on the last lap made a mistake as Swordy was giving it his all and putting pressure on him.

Lewis, Swindon

There was a time when Foxhill was just about as good as it got for British MX fans – let's hope we get to see a bit more of this awesome track in the future!

MINI MAGIC!

I have had a DBR subscription for a long time now and finally the article I wanted came up last month. Now could you please give me some information on how to join a minibike club and tell me how to start racing?

Rhys, Chester

Hook up to minibikepro.com Rhys.

COMING CLEAN

My uncle has just bought me a KTM 85 and he said I have to keep it really clean but even when I clean it and I think it's clean it's actually not so could you give me some hints and tips on how to keep my bike nice and shiny.

Paul, Orkney

The first step is to write a letter to DBR and get it published so we can send you some Muc-Off. Then wet your bike with a hose, spray with Muc-Off and leave for a few minutes. Give any really dirty bits a good brush and rinse well.

PIPE PUZZLER

I have recently purchased a 2008 YZ250F and have been researching exhausts for it. I have looked at dyno test for the Akrapovic and Leo Vince exhaust systems but they seem to have no major gain in the mid-range power (in fact a loss). I seem to be keeping the revs between 9,000 and 11,000 rpm so in your opinion what is the best exhaust for my bike or is an upgraded cdi unit the way forward. Really I am after more power mid to top. Any help would be great thanks.

Josh, Hartlebury

Good question Josh – we just wish we had a good answer to go with it! Tony Cairoli runs a Leo Vince, UTAG Yamaha go with Akrapovic and Pioneer Yamaha choose DEP so there's something to be said for all of them. Your best bet is probably to contact Craig at DEP and tell him what you're after – you'll find a number for him at www.deppipes.com

GOOD LIFE?

How come you don't run made-up letters praising your awesome, amazing, mega mag like other more down-market publications?

Felicity, Kendal

Because we've got integrity...

KTM KID!

My name is Callum Lewis and I am seven. I have been riding since I was two. I love my KTM and would love to ride in competitions with others who are mad about KTMs. I would love to go to a race with my dad and see the KTM team in action – they are the best.

Callum, South Wales

You need to be very nice to your dad and get him to take you to the Motocross des Nations at Donington in September – it's the biggest race in the world and there will be loads of top KTM riders including Shaun Simpson and Tommy Searle in action.



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk
All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.
Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

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Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of Etnies Trader shoes.





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In their persistent struggle to make motocross machines more enjoyable to ride and safer, suspension tuning wizards Pro Action have developed and manufactured this linkage rocker for Honda CRF150s. The linkage lowers the back end for better balance and helps make the rear end more stable as well as soaking up high-speed square-edge bumps more efficiently and eliminating mid-stroke harshness. All in all it's an ace piece of kit...

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Contact: 01977 672400



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Contact: 0845 450 1448



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Price: Mojave jersey £30 Chinook pant £100
Dakar glove £25
Supplier: adventure-spec.com
Contact: 0113 815 5495



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Colourful Coffins are specialists in bespoke picture coffin designs and have just launched a new service which for the first time allows individuals to work exclusively with its expert designers to create a very special and unique coffin.

"We're able to personalise every little detail such as names and colours so each picture coffin can be a very special and personal tribute to a much-loved individual and that's what makes our service so different," explains Colour Coffins' managing director Mary Tomes.

Until recently families have only been able to order a Colourful Coffin once a loved one has died but the new pre-design service gives people the chance to plan their own coffin design in the same way as they would leave a will or choose their funeral service in advance.

"Although no-one really likes to have to think about these things it's a very practical approach and in many ways it's a very special gift to leave behind for your family because they know they are fulfilling your last wishes," adds Tomes. "If you've loved motorbikes all your life then what better way to go on your final journey than in a coffin which depicts one of your favourites."

Price: **£99**
Supplier: colourfulcoffins.com
Contact: **01865 779172**

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If you want your Yamaha motocross bike to look like one of the Team UTAG Yamaha team bikes of Megan Lewis, Mel Pocock, Martin Barr or American teen sensation Zach Osbourne then you're in luck because the UK's premier graphics manufacturer MXM is releasing a limited number of the fetching team graphics kits to the public.

Available for '02 and onwards two-smokers and '03 to '08 four-poppers the kits come in three parts – tank/rad, trim kit (including fenders, lower and upper fork and swingarm) and custom number plate and airbox.

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Supplier: mxm-racing.com
Contact: **0191 286 0744**





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NAC NAC ATTACK!

MX2 WORLD CHAMPION ANTONIO CAIROLI HAS A WHOLE BAG OF TRICKS BUT IT'S THE NAC NAC THAT'S HIS FAVOURITE

Words by Adam Wheeler Photo by yamaha-racing.com

World MX2 champ Tony Cairoli loves to play to the crowd but among his arsenal of tricks the one he enjoys throwing out more than anything else is the Nac Nac.

"I have been doing this trick for a long time – in 1999 was when I started to pull it off with an 85cc machine. I took the Nac Nac because I was a big fan of Jeremy McGrath and I was always looking for any videos or pictures of him. Like most young kids I wanted to copy one of the stars."

Cairoli's admiration of SX legend McGrath extends to more than just the Nac Nac emulation. When asked by his older sister to suggest a name for his newly arriving nephew a decade ago there was no other choice and Jeremy is now a junior racer in his own right supported by his famous uncle.

Cairoli insists the Nac Nac was not a simple skill acquisition at first. "It was quite hard to learn actually and I did crash a few times at the beginning but now it is really easy and it is almost 10 years that I have been doing it. The Nac Nac can be done in different ways – for example when you do a whip at the same time but this is difficult.

I prefer to keep it the same as Jeremy did and place the bike on the other side of my body."

So, how does he do it?

"Well, the gear you are in or the speed you are going does not matter too much, although obviously the higher you go from the take-off then the easier it is to do and you can be more relaxed about it. When you are on the ramp you have to push a lot on the bike and as soon as you take off then you have to begin to put your weight onto one side of the bike.

"You start moving as soon as you are in the air. When you feel balanced on one side, then you drag your leg back and across the saddle. You get into position and look across to finish it.

"Coming in to land you need to put a bit more weight over the front of the bike so it is easy to get the leg back across. Although on some smaller jumps I have kept in on the side and landed with just one leg on the bike – this is not so simple though!"

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10.4



10.4

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High-filtration product that allows the bike to breathe, does not affect carburation and extends engine life. Also available as a liquid.

Sprays

RACING CHAIN



Racing Chain - 400ml
High-end PTFE-based grease for chains subjected to extreme conditions such as mud, dust and high rotation speeds. Available in 4 colours - red, green, blue and white.

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Sand Chain - 750ml
Specially developed for motorcycles and quads on desert and sand events.

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Degreases and dissolves dirt using the combined action of brushing and the product.

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Spray Chain - 750ml
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*With a hat-trick of wins –
and a pretty trick hat –
Matt Rebaud's looking
good for the Red Bull
X-Fighters title*

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FIG

MATFINISH!

REBAUD ON TOP AS THE RED BULL X-FIGHTERS GO OFF IN MADRID...

nestars



© Lukas Nazdraczev/Red Bull Photofiles



The Red Bull X-Fighters – the maddest, baddest, slickest freestyle tour on the planet – rocks up in Madrid at the Spanish capital's awesome Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas bullfighting arena where 23,000 fans are waiting to greet the world's top FMX riders.

The man on form going into Madrid is Mat Rebaud with wins in Mexico and the USA and a

second in Brazil ensuring he's miles clear in the series standings. And with second placed man Jeremy 'Twitch' Stenberg out injured – and just three rounds to go – the Swiss mentalist has got an A1 opportunity to put the X-Fighters all but out-of-reach.

And Rebaud does exactly that, claiming his third win of '08 with a solid performance aided

by fellow finalist Andre Villa stuffing up a no-hander lander and getting stuck between the quarter-pipe and the kicker. "The level of riding, the atmosphere and the result will go down in history," reckons Rebaud. "I never would have dreamed of this result at the start of the season."

Third place goes to world long jump





© Lukas Nazdraczew/Red Bull Photofiles



© Lukas Nazdraczew/Red Bull Photofiles

Opposite page: Rebaud throws down a Superflip Indy on his way to X-Fighters gold **Right:** Ronnie Renner flew into Madrid fresh on the back of setting a world record for the highest air ever **Above:** Brrrrrrmmmmmm! Dirt bikes aren't the only wheeled machines to get big air at the X-Fighters **Top:** X marks the spot – that's gold in that thar ring. Yarr!



© Lukas Nazdraczew/Red Bull Photofiles



RED BULL X-FIGHTERS

SERIES STANDINGS

1	<i>Matt Rebaud</i>	380 points
2	<i>Jeremy Stenberg</i>	235
3	<i>Robbie Maddison</i>	230
4	<i>Jeremy Lusk</i>	185
5	<i>Dany Torres</i>	180
6	<i>Andre Villa</i>	155



© Flo Hagenal/Red Bull Photofiles



© Andreas Schaad/Red Bull Photofiles

Opposite page: Kiss of Death Indy from Norwegian love machine Andre Villa **Above:** Rebaud makes sure the Madrid fans enjoy the Lynx effect **Above left:** Local hero Dani Torres knows how to get the Madrid crowd screaming **Below:** Until now the 540 Flair was considered impossible in FMX



© Flo Hagenal/Red Bull Photofiles

record holder Aussie Robbie Maddison who shows he's got the moves as well as the distance to push American Jeremy Lusk back to fourth.

But while winners are grinners, for home hero Dany Torres there are tears as he's knocked out at the quarter final stage by Lusk. "It was close – one more judge on my side and I would have beaten Lusk," says Torres. "To lose in that way is

bitter but I am pleased with my performance."

As well as Rebaud's hat-trick the event will also go down in freestyle history thanks to the aerial antics of Swede Fredrik Johansson who nails the first ever 540 flair in competition.

The X-Fighters now head to Wuppertal in Germany for round five on August 16 before the series finale in Warsaw on September 6.

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WALKER'S WEC!

OUR TECHNICAL EDITOR TAKES ON THE BEST ENDURO RIDERS ON THE PLANET – AND GETS HIS ASS HANDED TO HIM AFTER TWO DAYS OF TORTURE IN WALES...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Jonty Edmunds** and **Spode**

Lager! An amber-coloured liquid that monkeys with your sense of balance, makes ugly people look attractive and convinces the normally sane that stupid is clever. All of which helps to explain why one lubricated night I wobbled out of Marshfield's Lord Nelson public house, my arm around the beautiful Spode having formulated the genius plan of taking a stock 530 KTM EXC and heading off to the awesome WEC GP of Wales to compete with the world's best riders...

And within a couple of weeks – following some calls to the man of the moment Rowan Jones, communications with the lady of the moment Mary Kerr at the ACU and lots of cries for help to various stupendous sponsors – Team DBR/KP EQUIPE/ISO2 were on the road to the wilds of Wales with Spode at the helm of the Mayor of Neva Rite's battle bus.

As detailed last month, when I had the chance to sample some of the Hafren club's WEC course on a beautiful sunny day in the amazing forest it was all absolutely fantastic and the buzz was brilliant even then. Multiply that a few times and that is the buzz I felt when pulling up to the event HQ – as a rider – at the Llanidloes Rugby Club on the edge of town. It was then that it struck me just how massive this all was. The Joneses and the Hafren club – along with the ACU – had brought world championship enduro racing back to the UK. I've worked in this industry forever and spannered and raced all over the world but there was something simply awe-inspiring about this event.

This was the world's best! Full stop! There were no Carmichaels or Stewarts racing another championship on another continent and even David Knight was here having a wildcard ride. The guys at the top of the tree in WEC are the best in the world at what they do and to be part of the circus for a weekend was an absolute honour for me.

It was pretty strange to be at an event and not really know what was going on and what to do. With three special tests to study I spent a bit of time walking the cross test as it was closest to the paddock area. Once around it with Rob 'Rabbit' Wrayford was pretty much all I managed and as for walking the cross country test – I didn't get to see that until the event was under way thanks to Mr Grimsdall from BMW having to get back to his exhibition stand (and not wanting to get his chinos dirty).

As it turned out I should have listened to the big galoot from the Isle of Man and walked the cross country and extreme tests a couple of times to look for lines (cheers DK, you tried). Being a total wang I didn't as I was sure the rain which had been falling would soon stop and it would be a great day in the sun with the added element of fun that I didn't have a clue what or where I was doing or going! True DBR style!

Spodey, as usual, did a superb job in pimping the 530 for the job – he was begging me to modify some stuff for

the race but the idea was to run the bike as close to stock as possible and he really cracked up when I said the horn was staying! Externally he fitted it up with the Racetech plastics, grips, air filter, chain guides etc and fitted the Evoke Concepts graphics which tied in with the One Industries set already fitted. He also drilled a small water run-out hole in the airbox just below the filter as instructed by Knighter and then we got to run the beast on the test track, turning laps with some fast Johnny Foreigners and an extremely excited Euan McConnell – the man was pumped and the factory TM was trying to pull his arms off!

As the rain continued to fall from the Thursday afternoon, through Friday signing on and technical check and into Saturday morning my apprehension grew. I had gone from looking forward to getting on the 530 and riding some of the best going on earth to dreading dragging the beast through ruts up to my hairy boys. To say I was nervous would be an understatement...

The programme for the day was off to the cross test first thing followed by a six-mile ride out to the forest and three laps on the going including the cross country test and extreme test each lap against the clock. Spode, like myself, didn't really know what was going on and where he had to be so we decided he should just follow the crowd and we would use the first day to learn all about the world of WEC.

With the bike in the parc ferme until a specified time I waited outside the fence with Rabbit and Nate Kanney from the USA. Rabbit and myself were on the same minute for the day so the plan was to try to keep the fast bunny in sight and try to stay within my given time limits to complete each section of the course. There's only a 15-minute 'time out' allowance before you're out of the day's event so it was going to be tight. No messing – but this is the WEC!

Spodey, Scotty G, Karlos Armadillo and FowlersVecky had all been around for the start and seeing friendly faces made absolutely no difference – I was papping it! The roll off the start ramp with Rabbit was a moment I wish I'd enjoyed more but my nerves had the better of me. This was a massive moment for me, my first world championship event at 36 years young and I was annoyed because I couldn't stop feeling sick.

It was off to the cross test about a mile away from the paddock and the crowds were out in force. The rain can't dampen the spirits of enduro fans and it's the fans that make the races what they are – it was simply awesome to get out onto the test and have people waving and cheering their support! There must have been 50 corners on the cross test and I reckon I saw Uncle 'Ruprect' Dinham at 45 of them! That man and his crew are amazing and with enthusiasm like that I wound the big 530 Toomer up and tried to stay on board and do my best. I can't really put it into words how good it feels to be involved in a race against the clock like >>

Walker wrestles the big Toomer around a super-slippery Welsh test



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Simone Albergoni ends the event with a 2-4 card



Fabrizio Dini opts for paddle power

KILLER WALES!

IT'S A FIGHT JUST TO FINISH AS THE WORLD'S BEST ENDURO RIDERS SLUG IT OUT IN THE GP OF WALES

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

It's a cliché often used in enduros but when it comes to the recent GP of Wales it hits the nail squarely on the head – when the going gets tough, it's the tough that get going. At the GP of Wales only the tough survive!

The first WEC race to be held in the UK in close to 10 years, the Hafren Dirt Bike Club's world championship race is not only one of the hardest of recent seasons but also one of the best. With the infamous Welsh weather making day one seriously challenging, despite the rain, mud and ruts the event receives much praise as being a true WEC round.

Expecting to be made to work hard, the world's best enduro riders soon find out just how difficult a Welsh enduro can be as right from the start of day one the heavens open, making each of the three special tests as slippery as ice. And with the event's all-natural extreme test featuring an extremely steep, extremely difficult hill, come the end of the event more than a few riders see their results spoiled by costly mistakes.

But while there are numerous non-finishers on day one there are also those who richly deserve their time on the top step of the podium. Marc Germain – the wet weather specialist who before the GP of Wales hadn't claimed a win in '08 – gets into his groove early in the day and does just enough to finish ahead of Italian Simone Albergoni. With Finn Mika Ahola overcoming an early-in-the-day carburettor problem to claim third, Germain is more than pleased to end his podium

that and have the crowd behind you – for people like Knighter, Sagar, Edmo, Wakely and the rest of the UK riders on home turf it must boost them so high having a great crowd behind them.

I don't think I did too bad in the test for an old bloke but the real work was coming and so was even more heavy rain! With the easy part done it was off up the road to the forest and the tests. The main talk of the morning had been the 'tight check' – this was a section of the lap where you have to push super-hard to stay within your time limit.

The tight check on each lap was a 30-mile section and we had 50 minutes to cover the ground with less time to cover the same ground as the day went on. After riding like a lemon on the cross country and extreme tests on lap one as the rain continued to fall it was off to the dreaded tight check. I got to the start of the check with a couple of minutes to spare and Juan Knight, Wayne Braybrook and Rabbit were already there and chilling out before their minute clocked up and we could all get going.

These guys are all really cool to ride with and were helpful as I asked stupid questions about what was in store. Juan and Wayne went off on their minute and myself and Rabbit waited for our time to clock up before riding through the start flags to have our cards marked and hitting the going.

Rabbit was off like a scalded cat and as usual I forgot to zero my clock on the bike so I knew how much time was passing during the check. I stopped on the first hill and fumbled around for a minute or so trying to get it

sorted so Rabbit – who I was supposed to try to stay with for as long as possible to drag my pace up – was gone. As it was I think I could have only stayed with him for a couple of minutes as within the first mile of the 30-mile rut we had to ride in I parted company from the beast a couple of times.

This is a special kind of riding and I knew I was in for a long (or short) day if I didn't pull my finger out and learn to ride the rut at a higher pace. I say rut because as it turned out it was in fact one continuous rut varying in depth from a foot to three feet deep for the next 30 miles – a true test of a man's groin and my Paddy paddle power. After a couple of stops to try to cool the boiling 530 down I was actually pretty pleased with myself to get to the check only 10-and-a-half minutes over time considering I had walked most of the way on the beast.

The next check – a 45-minute blast including the second run around the cross country test – was still tight for me. A couple more stops to ease the temp of the bike and clear my eyes out made the time run down quickly and I knew things were going to go pretty mouldy. Not even a super-pumped Uncle Dinham and Pad could stop the inevitable 'timing out'. The bike was taking a pounding, my groin was taking a pounding and we were only into the second of three laps. My 15 minutes grace were up and we were out of day one.

I was gutted but we had given it a go – maybe things would have been different if I had only let Spode remove the big Toomer's horn! I can't stress my respect enough for everyone who was out there and giving it everything and with under half the entry finishing the day it gives >>



Anders Eriksson winds up the factory G450X Beemer

drought. "I like the mud and I liked the special tests here so it was a good day. It was close at the finish with Albergoni but I managed to keep out of trouble on the extreme test."

On day two Ahola steps up a gear and wanting to maintain his position at the top of the E1 championship standings claims his fifth win of the season. Behind him championship rival Ivan Cervantes places as runner-up while day one's top two riders Germain and Albergoni finish third and fourth respectively.

"I'm pretty sure I could have won on day one because I finished 30 seconds behind and lost one minute on the first test," comments Ahola. "Ivan was much faster on day two so I really had to push hard, right from the start. Two wins would have been good but I'm pleased with my results."

Tom Sagar, Britain's top rider in Enduro 1, records his best result of the season with two fifth place finishes. Well positioned for a first ever E1 podium result on day one, Sagar joins the long list of riders to get caught out by the extreme test hill but costly mistake aside still finishes relatively close to winner Germain. On day two Sagar closes the gap between himself and the rider at the top of the class and performs consistently throughout the day. "I hoped >>



Marco Tarkkala posts a pair of podium finishes

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RESULTS

DAY ONE >>

E1

1	Marc Germain (Yamaha)	54:25.30
2	Simone Albergoni (Yamaha)	54:29.64
3	Mika Ahola (Honda)	54:58.99
4	Ivan Cervantes (KTM)	55:05.65
5	Tom Sagar (KTM)	55:43.19
9	Graham Jarvis (Sherco)	1:01:34.61
10	Robert Jones (Yamaha)	1:03:56.16
13	Andrew Edwards (KTM)	1:09:12.39
15	Richard Hay (KTM)	1:35:23.79

E2

1	Juha Salminen (KTM)	52:30.26
2	David Knight (KTM)	53:16.38
3	Johnny Aubert (Yamaha)	54:38.74
4	Paul Edmonson (Suzuki)	55:45.58
5	Joakim Ljunggren (Husaberg)	55:51.91
16	Kevin Murray (Yamaha)	1:08:09.34
17	Justin Wilson (Yamaha)	1:13:03.98
18	Darren Wheeler (Husaberg)	1:13:07.52
19	Chris Hockey (Honda)	1:13:53.58
20	Rich Warner (KTM)	1:22:16.26

E3

1	Christophe Nambotin (Gas Gas)	54:07.63
2	Sebastien Guillaume (Husqvarna)	55:17.93
3	Marko Tarkkala (KTM)	56:15.45
4	Samuli Aro (KTM)	57:00.40
5	Marcus Kehr (KTM)	57:04.08
9	Euan McConnell (TM)	58:12.93
12	Juan Knight (Gas Gas)	1:00:37.66
13	Wayne Braybrook (Gas Gas)	1:01:11.08
14	Edward Jones (KTM)	1:02:49.20
15	Gordon Clarke (TM)	1:10:58.25

EJ

1	Oriol Mena (KTM)	58:10.53
2	Robert Kvarnstrom (TM)	1:03:42.15
3	Simon Wakely (Husqvarna)	1:04:14.34
4	Oskari Kantonen (KTM)	1:04:54.27
5	Jeremy Joly (Sherco)	1:05:03.16
8	Ollie Moyce (Yamaha)	1:12:17.51
12	Gethin Price (Honda)	1:38:07.45

that I'd be able to turn my season around here and to a certain extent I have. I've had a lot of bad luck this year and that continued on day one but to finish the weekend as close to Albergoni and Germain as I did on day two is good. It's been a great event."

At the top of the Enduro 2 class WEC heavyweights Juha Salminen and Johnny Aubert claim a day win each while Knighter returns to the WEC and scores two podium finishes. Needing desperately to finish ahead of championship rival Aubert if he is to have any chance of winning an eighth world title, Juha Salminen gets a helping hand from Knighter as the Manxman splits the two riders and demotes Aubert to third.

Taking advantage of the US GNCC series' summer break, DK puts in a good showing despite having had little time to re-adjust to the demands of the WEC. But on day two Knighter drops one place to third as Aubert jumps to the top of the results and leaves all other E2 class riders a little shell-shocked at his turn of speed.

"The first day was great but on day two I had a few problems," explains Knight. "I realised that my bike set-up wasn't perfect which made the extreme test a little harder than it was but I really enjoyed the event. Being towards the back of my class made it tough early on day one but Juha was riding well so I knew it would be hard to beat him. Johnny's speed on day two was surprising – he certainly showed me and Juha how fast he is."

To top the E3 class in Wales you need to be French and riding a two-stroke – or so it seems. With Gas Gas rider Christophe Nambotin winning day one and Seb

Guillaume aboard his Husqvarna topping day two it's Nambotin who claims the biggest winning margin.

Over one minute ahead of Guillaume on day one, Nambotin claims his second win of the season in style while Guillaume and third placed Marko Tarkkala can do little to stop him. But on day two Nambotin sees another podium result go begging as several small mistakes keep him down in fourth.

Guillaume gets his head down to emerge at the sharp end of the E3 class as day two nears its close. But with Tarkkala breathing down his neck the day's final test decides the eventual class outcome. "It was really close between myself and Marko but the last test went really well for me," explains Seb. "I was lucky to finish second on day one but on day two I felt like I rode well so to win was great."

With Guillaume managing to just finish ahead of Tarkkala, Australian Stefan Merriman rounds off the podium while E3 championship leader Samuli Aro finishes a disappointing sixth.

Getting the short end of the stick and having to compete after each of the three senior classes, the Enduro Junior class is decimated on day one with just four riders remaining on time while only 12 of the 40 that start manage to finish. But it's a good event for Brit Si Wakely as the Husqvarna rider claims his first ever WEC podium with a well-deserved third on day one.

"I'm not the biggest rider so I found it pretty difficult on the 450 in the forest. But I knew that there weren't too many riders left in so I just kept pushing. I'm well chuffed with the result."



Spode gets busy with the tape



Scot Euan McConnell nails a top 10 finish on day one

an indication of just how tough the going was. Bloody brilliant!

That was it! The horn was coming off for the second day! We wanted to keep it stock but this was ridiculous! Spode also modified the in-line thermostat to increase the continuous flow of coolant and hopefully stop the weapon getting so hot when the going got deep. The weather was improving and the sun made an appearance so the mood got a little better. Scott Grimsdall took great pleasure in ripping me about my performance and ISO2 Stu and the KTM double act of Ross and Rich tried to give me some encouragement in between digs.

The nerves were back for Sunday morning and although I was really looking forward to getting back out there I was keeping an eye on the sky and praying for a dry day. After a few words of encouragement from Samuli Aro it was off with the unlucky Rabbit (his coolant drain bolt came out and he seized the Gasser on the last lap of day one) to the cross test and then the forest. The organisers had modified the course during the first day to shorten the tight check (after I and many others had been booted out) so day two was looking more user-friendly.

The extreme test was awesome to ride, I was still shocking on the cross country test and the slightly eased tight check was ahead. Once

again I forgot to zero my timer so it was business as usual. I wanted the finish but I was simply riding too slow and steady. The ruts needed to be attacked and I wasn't doing that, the bike boiled a couple of times and I lost any confidence I had.

It was only about halfway round the check when the top guys in E1 caught and passed me that I started to enjoy the ride – the ruts were drying up a bit and the 530 was starting to feel rideable again. For 20 minutes I felt happy with my riding and the bike as I got to follow Albergoni. These top guys are amazing in this type of going and it was great to follow some lines and watch their techniques. I knew I was going to lose some time on the check but at least it wasn't raining and I was having fun on the bike.

With four minutes lost the next check was down a level in pace and even after a couple more offs I had a smile on my chops as I once again followed the Italian Yamaha rider. As we came out of the forest and the cross country test was clear on the horizon the heavens opened and my heart sank. I raced to the test to try to beat the rain and once again Uncle D, Pad and Spodey were there. Uncle D was around the test shouting encouragement and pointing lines out for me as the rain hammered down. >>



Antoine Meo attacks a Welsh test

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STILL FAST EDDY!

PAUL GOES FOURTH

Okay, so it's Knighter and Si Wakely who are the Brits who finish on the podium in Llanidloes but Paul Edmondson's pair of fourths in the Enduro 2 class are hugely impressive! Just two days after his 39th birthday, the four-time world champion shows that he's still got what it takes to pull a solid world championship result out of the bag.

In what will likely be his last ever world championship ride, Fast Eddy certainly does himself proud. Despite not being able to match the pace of Salminen, Knight or Aubert – few in the world can – he shows the many youngsters in the E2 class that Paul Edmondson and a 250cc two-stroke is still a difficult combination to beat.

"It was great to back in world championship competition, especially in the UK. I wasn't expecting too much but I knew the conditions would be pretty good for me. The first day was really difficult but being on a 250 two-stroke was a big help. I'm pleased with my results from both days but finishing fourth on day two, which was drier, was good. There are a lot of fast riders in the E2 class and when the conditions are dry they're all fast."

FIRST CLASS!

HAFREN HEROES

With no prior experience of having organised a world championship event, the Hafren Dirt Bike Club don't let their lack of experience get in the way. With the weather making everything just that little bit harder for them, the club receive overwhelming praise for running what many consider the best event of the series so far this year.

"It's been great," reckons crowd favourite David Knight. "I'd forgotten how enjoyable WEC events were and the Hafren club put on a really great event. The extreme test was one of the best I've ever ridden and it was great to see so many people come and watch the race."

And as well as Britain's top riders reckoning that the

Fast Eddy goes 4-4 to show the WEC regulars he's still got it



Wales is a happy hunting ground for Tom Sagar



event's a success, many overseas riders are quick to thank the club. "It's what we need in the WEC," comments Mika Ahola. "It was tough from the start of the day to the end of the day and not just on the special tests. The track was good, the special tests were good and the paddock looked good."

So how is it from the club's perspective? "It was a lot of hard work but knowing that so many riders enjoyed the event and that so many people thought we did a good job makes it worthwhile," explains Rowan Jones. "A lot of people worked hard to ensure the event was a success and the Hafren club is extremely grateful to all that supported, encouraged and helped us make the event happen."

RESULTS

DAY TWO >>

E1

1	Mika Ahola (Honda)	49:55.00
2	Ivan Cervantes (KTM)	50:16.65
3	Marc Germain (Yamaha)	50:18.29
4	Simone Albergoni (Yamaha)	50:35.71
5	Tom Sagar (KTM)	50:42.14
13	Andrew Edwards (KTM)	56:58.63
14	Robert Jones (Yamaha)	57:17.68
17	Richard Hay (KTM)	1:00:38.20

E2

1	Johnny Aubert (Yamaha)	48:12.58
2	Juha Salminen (KTM)	48:57.89
3	David Knight (KTM)	49:41.95
4	Paul Edmondson (Suzuki)	51:39.28
5	Rodrig Thain (TM)	51:47.27
18	Chris Hockey (Honda)	56:30.25
19	Kevin Murray (Yamaha)	56:37.51

E3

1	Sebastien Guillaume (Husqvarna)	50:38.71
2	Marko Tarkkala (KTM)	50:45.40
3	Stefan Merriman (Aprilia)	50:53.78
4	Christophe Nambotin (Gas Gas)	50:55.41
5	Marcus Kehr (KTM)	50:56.14
12	Euan McConnell (TM)	53:19.00
13	Juan Knight (Gas Gas)	54:19.23
15	Wayne Braybrook (Gas Gas)	55:19.16
16	Edward Jones (KTM)	56:05.56
19	Gordon Clarke (TM)	58:04.94
20	Rob Wrayford (Gas Gas)	59:28.97

EJ

1	Thomas Oldrati (KTM)	51:26.97
2	Oriol Mena (KTM)	52:08.90
3	Oscar Balletti (Honda)	53:26.20
4	Jeremy Joly (Sherco)	53:31.91
5	Simon Wakely (Husqvarna)	54:09.40
9	Philip McLaughlin (TM)	55:37.80
17	Ollie Moyce (Yamaha)	57:30.43
18	Jamie Paget (TM)	59:22.15
20	David Brick (Kawasaki)	1:02:39.53

CHEERS M'DEARS

WAKKER'S FAN CLUB

The role of honour is long and in no particular order I would like to thank... Sean, Sutt and all at the mag, Spode, KTM UK, ISO2 Nutrition, KP EQUIPE Racing, threecrossdemolition.co.uk, Armadillo Design, Hafren Dirt Bike Club, ACU, Mary Kerr, Rowan Jones, Scott Grimsdall, ELF oils, Racetech, SixSixOne, DSM Off Road, Evoque Concepts, No Fear Europe, Spy, TCX, Kreiga, Easton, Mike the Doc, Team Dinham, Rabbit, Team Knighter, Moto Surf, Belligerence, Rock It! and Neva Rite camper hire.



Knighter takes a break from the GNCC to race in Wales

Knighter had likened the test to riding on black ice the day before and I had to agree. By the third corner I had slithered off but the crowd kept waving and I was just trying to get to the end of it. I had another hefty crash only a few corners from the end that knocked the wind out of me but at least I could get sorted as I was running early for the next check.

After taking on fuel, new gloves and goggles and plenty of ISO2 it was off to the extreme test keeping to my new time schedule of going on the fifth minute after my official time. Nik Fisk was commentating up there and it was so much fun to battle around the test in front of a massive crowd even though I felt a bit dodgy after forcing so much food and drink down me and holding onto my toilet requirements at the check. I made it around the test without s****ing myself – but only just!

Lap two was well under way and the tight check was approaching. I hoped to get a little closer to staying on time but the rain had slicked the ruts up again and I was back to battling with the bike. Sure enough, about halfway through the check and with the bike getting hot due to my slow pace the clutch started to give up the

ghost. The fluid must have got super hot in the master cylinder which started to make the lever stick halfway in and the clutch was slipping and rattling more by the metre. Eventually I lost drive at the end of a long series of ruts and that was that. I waited for it to cool and pushed it up to the nearest fireroad where a couple of marshals helped me out with directions back to HQ at the service area.

When the clutch cooled there was just enough on it to get the bike moving and half-an-hour later I was back at service and the depression was starting to set in. That was it, it was over for us so myself, Spode and Monster man went to watch on the cross country test and cheer on the Brits. Just watching the other riders is great for learning and every one of the Brits were riding great and really hangin' it out.

After watching some of the riders through we just wanted to get back and sorted. I was pleased and still am that we took the event on even though things didn't work out perfectly. To be given the opportunity to compete at the event was, like I said earlier, a real honour and I would like to thank EVERYONE involved in getting me and my wee team there.



PUPIL POWER!

A BREEDING GROUND FOR TALENT OR SPOILT KIDS PAMPERED WITH NEW BIKES AND HUGE MOTORHOMES? WHOLESOME, HEALTHY FAMILY FUN OR HYPED-UP PARENTS BARKING AT THEIR OFFSPRING AND BRAWLING WITH EACH OTHER? SCHOOLBOY MOTOCROSS POLARISES OPINION LIKE NO OTHER PART OF DIRT BIKING – BUT WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT IT?

Words and photos by Adam Duckworth







IT CAN TURN TALENTED YOUTHS INTO WORLD CHAMPIONS.

From Graham Noyce in the '70s through Neil Hudson and Dave Thorpe in the '80s and Jamie Dobb in Y2K, every British world motocross champion started his career and was talent-spotted in schoolboy racing.

And as the only true blue collar motorsport it's a fine way for a dedicated youngster to make a professional career as an athlete. The man tipped to be next in line is 15-year-old Scott Elderfield. Now in his seventh season of racing, he's picked up a ride on a Swift Suzuki RMZ250 and is totally dominant in the schoolboy scene.

Scott's dad Chris is an ex-racer who opened up a small motocross shop 17 years ago, selling used and a few new bikes at rock-bottom prices. Doing his bit to keep the local lads racing affordably. It was natural Scott would take up racing but it's his raw talent and determination to succeed that has seen him do so well.

He became world mini champion on a Kawasaki KX65 in 2002 and looked set for glory as he shot upwards. Every year the family saved up for a five-week riding trip to Florida in the winter to prepare for the coming season. All looked good until a huge crash at a race in Belgium at the world mini championships saw him with a ripped liver. "It was June 4, 2006," recalls Scott. "A day I'll never forget. I was so badly injured I didn't race at all in 2007."

It made him even more determined to do well so he spent hours in the gym getting ready for his comeback then training with ex-British 125cc champion Greg Hanson. He saved up and bought a cheap Beta trials

bike to improve his off-road technique. It seems to have worked as his style is as smooth, natural and seemingly effortless as the greats.

"All I do is prepare for motocross," he says. "I don't go out at night messing about like other people my age. I just want to be a motocross rider."

He started 2008 on a KTM his dad bought and made national headlines when he entered the opening Maxxis British championship round and finished fifth. That attracted the attention of the Swift Suzuki team who loaned him two bikes.

"We may look like we've got full factory support but we still have to do lots ourselves," says Chris. "The engine and suspension came from the Swift team. The suspension is their old-spec factory Showa stuff sorted by K-Tech and the motor has had some head work. We've got Akrapovic pipes but are going to test DEP soon."

Scott is one of the major players in the schoolboy scene but for the final two Maxxis rounds will move up to the adult class and take on the big guns again. That will lead to a full British championship assault next year and a crack at some GPs – if he can land a full-time ride on a GP team.

"We turned down a Kawasaki ride in Europe this year as we wanted to win in Britain," explains Chris.

It was – and still is – a gamble. A year racing in Europe could have been a great stepping stone to GPs and provided vital high-level competition. Only time will tell if he's made the right decision...



IT'S THE LAST BASTION OF COMPETITIVE TWO-STROKE RACING.

There's only one class of serious motocross racing where the two-strokes still reign supreme against four-stroke competition and that's the small-wheel 85cc class.

While the power advantage of the Honda CRF150 is crucial in the big wheel class where the riders are older and larger, the younger and lighter lads in the small-wheelers fare better on the lighter and more manoeuvrable 85cc two-strokes. With featherweights on board, the power benefit of the thumper is simply not an issue.

King of the small wheel class is 12-year-old Jordan Godwin from Newport, Gwent. His six-year riding career

saw him start on KTMs and he's never ridden anything else. His two bikes are spannered by his father Paul who finds them easy to maintain due to their relative simplicity compared to their four-stroke cousins.

"The KTM85 is fast enough to win right out of the box – especially in the sand," says Paul. "There's not a CRF150 that can keep up. All we do is put on a PPS pipe, V-force reeds and a Hinson clutch basket. That's it!"

Paul's maintenance schedule sees him put in a new piston and clutch plates for every British championship round. "I estimate we spend around £30,000 a year on racing!" he says. "I'm lucky that I own my own business

so can afford to do it. You couldn't do it if you had a 'normal' job."

The Godwins take their racing seriously. The whole family including mum and 15-year-old sister Danika pile into their motorhome to support Jordan. In winter they holiday in the US so he can practice in the good weather and they hire ex-GP rider Justin Morris as a trainer. They also invest in home schooling which allows Jordan to go practising two days in the week.

"I am obsessed by racing motocross," admits Jordan. "It's all I want to do."

2



Motocross is a family affair – and obsession – for the Godwins

3

Like father, like son! Rob and Ben are a talented team



FATHERS CAN INSPIRE THEIR OFFSPRING AND TEACH THEM THE ROPES.

There aren't many other sports where great racers so often sire successful offspring. Kurt and Dave Nicoll. Mark and John Banks. Carl and Stuart Nunn. Odds are that pretty soon you'll be adding Rob Meek and his 11-year-old son Ben Watson to that list.

Meek is one of Britain's greatest ever all-round dirt bike competitors, despite only starting at age 17. "I drove myself to my first ever motocross race with my Red Rocket on a trailer," he says. But in his third year of racing he won the AMCA 250 championship. He's also led the British motocross GP, won the Weston beach race five times, tasted victory in British enduro championship rounds, won at national-level supermoto and is even a British championship-level trials rider.

His professional career only stopped in 2004 when, aged 36, he hurt his shoulder crashing in supermoto. He still continues to race though and when his sons Ryan – now 15 – and 14-year-old Nathan took up racing he knew it would keep the family together and provide good fun weekends away. Just low-key fun family time at local club meetings.

But when his youngest, Ben, took up racing after riding a few laps on Jamie Dobb's personal practice track at age five, Meek realised that he was special. "From age seven he just about won everything he entered," says Rob. "I decided he was so good we had to give him a chance to fulfil his potential. I owed it to him. And it changed everything.

"But I never pushed any of my sons to race. I made bikes available to them if they wanted them. God knows what I'd have done if we'd have had three girls!"


The Meek family are committed to racing and giving Ben all the help they can. "But it puts pressure on us," he says. "Financially and in time and effort we all have to put in. It's not a normal family life but we keep it as a complete family thing and you do get the rewards."

Ben has already travelled the world and tasted success. He's the only youth rider ever to be fully supported by KTM UK and has picked up support from Troy Lee, CI Sport and more. He finished third at the Loretta Lynn's US nationals and has raced in Las Vegas. He was officially a factory Cobra automatic rider in the US after beating their whole factory team.

This season he's moved up to the 85cc class and despite being one of the youngest in the field is already up at the front. He was leading the European championship until the family decided trips to Latvia and Romania were just a jaunt too far this summer.

Ben has been selected by the ACU Academy where, as part of a select squad, he gets advice on training, diet and even sports psychology.

That, along with advice and support from his dad, is the best possible chance he has of not only matching his father's achievements but overshadowing them.



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The entire Edey family are extreme sport junkies

IT'S A PERFECT ANTIDOTE FOR A WORLD OF MOLLYCODDLED, PLAYSTATION-OBSESSED, SLOTHFUL YOOFS.

The Daily Mail would have you believe British youth are all square-eyed, obese hoodies wrapped in cotton wool by a nanny state fixated with health and safety red tape. But the Edey family from Peterborough are proof that schoolboy motocross is packed with parents who understand the value of a healthy, outdoor life. And who trust their offspring with the responsibility and discipline that racing a motorcycle brings.

The whole family are extreme sport junkies. "We're all competitive," explains mum Jane, a former jet-skiing champion and ex-motocrosser who now rides a 450cc Honda TRX quad and helps run the Cambridge club. "And I'm a qualified clerk-of-the-course and national steward," she adds.

Dad runs a bike tuning shop and is a handy motocross and enduro rider. He even built himself a Honda CR500 engine in a CRF250 frame, just for fun. Even older sister Gemma, 21, is an ex jet-skiing champion whose extreme sport hobbies are temporarily on hold now she's at university.

But nine-year-old son Jake is the wildest of all. He likes snowboarding, jet-skiing, surfing, mountain biking and kiteboarding and also does trials, BMX racing and karting. And on his days off he loves to swim. "But not in a pool, in the river – where his dad and me learned to swim as kids," explains Jane. "It's all about having fun and being healthy. All outdoors stuff. Actually we succumbed to peer pressure and bought him a PlayStation Portable but he prefers to be outside doing things."

Jake's favourite sport is motocross. As one of the youngest in the 65cc class, it's his first year on bikes with manual gearboxes which is always a tough test for kids used to the twist-and-go automatics. But he's managing well, getting better all the time and, most of all, having fun.

Luke Hawkins has a pair of the trickiest bikes in the paddock



IT'S HAS THE MOST MODIFIED RACE BIKES ANYWHERE.

While adult-sized bikes often have thousands of pounds worth of bolt-on bits thrown at them in a bid to squeeze a tiny extra ounce of performance, schoolboy race bikes can take mods to a whole new level. Especially since Honda launched the exotic CRF150 four-stroke and the aftermarket manufacturers have gone mad producing bits to make them better.

And there's no more exotic CRF than the pair of identical race bikes owned by 14-year-old Luke Hawkins which cost a cool £10,000 each. Luke's dad Kelvin, an ex-AMCA racer from Bath, explains. "We have backing from PAR Honda which means we race CRFs in the big wheel class. They are faster, more torquey and easier to ride than anything else."

Hawkins starts by throwing away the stock bike's

steel frames and replacing them with £1800 aluminium perimeter frames made by custom firm BBR which are copies of the frames used by the full-sized CRFs. A custom fuel tank sits between the frame rails to lower the bike's centre of gravity. "They are slightly bigger than the stock frames which is better as the riders grow," says Kelvin. "And Luke was getting so big he was banging his knees on the bars."

Next is a full £2000 Ohlins suspension kit including forks and a rear shock. "The shock makes a massive difference," says Kelvin. "We had the standard shock revalved but it's nowhere near as good as the Ohlins."

The Ohlins forks have recently been discontinued as the Swedish firm concentrates on making replacement damping internals for standard forks. "They are rare

now and will become even more so," he continues.

Then £700 worth of Talon wheels are added, along with Bud triple clamps and Renthal fat bars plus a £600 Leo Vince titanium exhaust and the motor is tuned by Pro Circuit. "New cams, valves, copper valve seats, high-compression piston...the works," says Kelvin. SFB engine cases, machined from solid aluminium with quick-detach clutch covers, are fitted along with a Vertex ignition, FRO titanium footpegs, Hinson clutch basket and big-bore GMX radiators.

But for Luke, it's not just about all show and no go. He's incredibly fast and challenging for the British title. "The suspension, frame and engine mods are vital at this level of racing," explains Kelvin. "It's not just about owning the trickiest bike in the paddock."

JEM WHATLEY WON
THREE 250 NATIONAL
TITLES FOR SUZUKI



THRILLS N' SPILLS!

IN THE CONCLUDING PART OF HIS JEREMY WHATLEY SPECIAL, JACK TAKES US FROM 1985 ALL THE WAY UP TO THE PRESENT DAY...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

Just four weeks after breaking his wrist at Mallory, Kristian Whatley made a courageous comeback in the British U21 championship at Hawkstone Park. Fifth place overall not only kept Kristian and his CCM in contention for the crown, it also echoed his dad Jeremy's equally brave return to action at Hawkstone from a similar injury 23 summers ago.

Jem Whatley's manager Dave Grant had engineered a remarkable move to Kawasaki and 500 GPs for 1985 alongside American legend Danny 'Magoo' Chandler. I ventured sceptically down to Grant's house on the south coast to do a feature and photoshoot for DBR and was astonished to find Magoo slouched breezily on the sofa in Dave's front room alongside an awestruck Whatley.

We snapped some suitably outrageous antics free-riding out on the local heath but the American later caused Kawasaki UK boss Alec Wright terminal offence by getting drunk and was dismissed. Grant found him a niche at KTM while Jem stayed with Team Green and finished a fantastic third behind the works Hondas of Andre Malherbe and Dave Thorpe at Sittendorf in his first ever 500 grand prix.

Third next time out in the first moto of the French GP at Thouars, Jem lay sixth in the table when that broken wrist halted him mid-season. He returned, sensationally, just in time for another day of high drama at Hawkstone Park. Everybody assumed

that a fit Dave Watson – also mixing 500 GPs and 250 nationals on a Kawasaki – would lift his first national crown in that rough, unforgiving Shropshire sand. The strange format back then featured heats crowned by a 40-minute plus two-lap final. Jem had sprouted a Jerry Dammers goatee beard during his lay-off but decided to have it shaved off by DBR's very own race tester Chris Maindonald the night before the race. It worked. His luck changed and a riveting race-long contest between Watson and Whatley saw the latter victorious to retain his 250cc title!

Hired by Mike Carter for Cagiva in 1986, Jem unluckily snapped a collarbone back at Hawkstone Park for the first British Open round and missed two GPs. He rebounded resiliently with second in race one at Gallarate in northern Italy behind local hero Michele Fanton. Then he thrashed everybody in Czechoslovakia, traded race wins with Jacky Vimond on a glorious day at Farleigh Castle and finished second to the Frenchman back at Rothenthurm in Switzerland where he'd lost his chance of a world title at the penultimate GP of 1984.

Third behind Vimond and Michele Rinaldi entering Sweden's final round at Saxtorp, Whatley slipped back to fourth in the table behind double race winner Gert-Jan van Doorn. But ever the impish enthusiast, Jem turned up at Luxembourg for that awesome final 500 GP where any one of Thorpe, Malherbe, Eric Geboers or



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

Georges Jobe could be crowned world champion.

I stood with him during practice as Thorpe floundered round the slippery adverse cambers of Folkendange. Eventually, an exasperated Whatley could stand no more! He leapt over the fence, pulled David over and pointed out where he should be going. Thorpe listened intently like an admonished schoolboy then did as he was told. The next day, in an epic first race duel with Malherbe, that was where he took advantage of a mistake by the wayward Belgian to snatch a vital victory and, ultimately, his second world championship!

They then joined forces at the most famous MX des of them all, at Maggiora, where their top five finishes in the final moto ensured that Great Britain were on the podium, second to all-conquering Americans Rick Johnson, David Bailey and Johnny O'Mara and ahead of the host nation!

The 1987 season started well. Jem and his sidekick 'Maverick' drove up to London through a blizzard in early March for my birthday party, commandeered the sound system and virtually blew the roof off my apartment! But back at Heron Suzuki with new team manager Rob

Hooper he suffered a dismal year abroad. "It was a poor deal," rues Hooper, who still runs the Relentless Suzuki team today. "Bog standard bikes, his own transporter and a mate as a mechanic. Jem needed a team that looked after him." The season was leavened by a fourth 250 national title and success at Weston-super-Mare where he forced his RM250 through hideous early congestion by riding the rim of the circuit in a quite extraordinary display of finesse to become the first quarter-litre conqueror of the beach race.

Teamed up with his new mechanic – Elliot Banks-Browne's dad Ian – and a factory-spec Suzuki, Jem ignited the first round of the 1988 250 GPs at Salindres in France with a stunning victory over reigning 125 world champ John van den Berk. The Dutchman hit back in Italy before they shared race wins in a rain-lashed maelstrom at the only British GP to visit Frome in Somerset. There, in a glutinous first moto, he finished third behind van den Berk and Chesterfield Suzuki's American star Rodney Smith. But in a hellish second race, drenched by a huge thunderstorm, the redoubtable Whatley overpowered world champs van den Berk and Pekka Vehkonen to the joy of a saturated crowd! >>



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The Dutchman narrowly led the series from Jem as they headed to Belgium. I was at a 500 GP that weekend when, on Saturday afternoon, an agitated Eric Geboers marched past. "Have you heard the news from Belgium?" Eric looked visibly choked. "Whatley has failed to qualify!" It seemed that a sudden, savage downpour had struck Marche en Famenne before Jem put in a fast lap. His Suzuki team-mate Rob Herring did his best to help by beating van den Berk that day and 'Buck' Whatley began heaving himself back into contention. But returning from Unadilla he went out practising round his favourite local woodlands venue at Matchams Park, toppled off in a slow, innocuous hairpin and broke a leg. It was the day after Hooper had obtained visas for the GPs in South America...

That was that. Outrageous as ever, he turned up at Weston to ride round watching on an ancient Bultaco trials iron and even came back to win the first GP of 1989 at Payerne in Switzerland. It was to prove his fifth and final grand prix victory, putting him level in the current all-time GP winners' list with world champions Shayne King and Marcus Hansson. But a certain Jean-Michel Bayle took command of that 1989 250 series.

In 1990, hired by Mitsui Yamaha, Jem suffered a sorry year abroad with rooky mechanic Steve Dixon (introduced to me at Maggiora as 'Spoons' after yet another TV character!), though on the domestic scene they enjoyed some tremendous duels with the new 250 national champ, 19-year-old Jamie Dobb.

His ill-fated 1991 with Action Workshop Kawasaki, derailed by another wrist injury, nonetheless netted a British Open championship. "Jeremy was brilliant on that stock Kawasaki," recalls Action Workshop team manager Julian Clarke, "beating the factory bikes of Thorpe and Malin. But when we got hold of ex-works Hondas through Eric Geboers for 1992 he felt the pressure and his head went." Joined by Billy Liles and Warren Edwards, Whatley's old insecurities resurfaced. He mounted the rostrum with Jobe and Liles in Germany, at Hawkstone Park and in France during a mid-season purple patch but injury meant he missed the last two rounds and slipped from sixth to ninth in the series, a result he repeated in 1993 when signed by Gordon Jones at KTM. His final GP podium came at Faenza in Italy that year alongside champion elect Jacky Martens who he'd first encountered in a Hawkstone 250 GP 11 years earlier!

Whatley saw out his twilight grand prix years on a private Wulfsport Honda. Kristian, a wild five-year-old, was already clambering all over his dad's bike during his swansong season in 1995 when he holed out at Namur where me and Mark Hardie were encamped alongside the Whatley truck in the paddock. "That's ironic, Jack," grinned Jem. "Starts were the one thing I never got right when I was young and fast!"

A brilliant engineer, like the dad he missed so much, Jem's pet projects included a go-kart powered by an ex-Jobe factory KX500 engine and two old crash-damaged jeeps cut in two and welded together to scare the living daylights out of his local 4x4 off-road competition club (they sneered until he beat them!). He became a highly respected technician with the Crescent Suzuki BSB squad and is fondly remembered by ex-world endurance champion Terry Rymer, whose bikes he fettled as crew chief in 1998.

"Jem was absolutely meticulous as a mechanic," recalls Rymer. "And he holds a special place in my heart. So off the wall. Best thing was he used to make me laugh.

But he used to take the piss out of road racers and always called me 'Tarmac Tel' until I persuaded the team to let him out on my spare bike at Thruxton. That was a bit mean as it's the fastest and bumpiest track in the country. He came back white with eyeballs like saucers and admitted there was more to this road racing than he'd realised. But he didn't disgrace himself!" Jeremy's lap times were only six or seven seconds off the pace...

More recently, Jem has sold up in Hampshire and semi-retired to a plot of land in Spain where he's planning a motocross venture with wife Karen. "Jeremy was such a frustrating guy to work with," laments Rob Hooper. "So skilful. Some days the body was there and the brain wasn't. Others, he was as good as anybody in the world and better than most."

Kristian's well-being has meantime been left in the gallant hands of Karen's family. Kristian lives with granddad Jerry and uncle Kevin Ruddock – himself a former Top 40 British championship rider – and is trained by ex-British 125 and four-stroke champion and new CCM team-mate Greg Hanson. Greg recently took the lad to meet Julian Clarke. "He's Jeremy's double," says Clarke. "Same character, same silky smooth, effortless style. He asked me if I had any advice for him. I said carry on riding a bike like your dad but do nothing else the same!"

Now, fascinatingly, Jem Whatley's old friend and fierce rival Dave Thorpe, in his new role at CCM, might step into the breach and take Jeremy's Chip off the Old Block in hand!



DAVE THORPE ON... ...THE WHATLEYS

"To be honest, when Jeremy first came on the scene I didn't take him too seriously. Then he stepped on to that 500 Suzuki and gave me a massive run in Northern Ireland at the John Donnelly International. I kept thinking 'he'll go away in a minute' and he didn't. From that day on I took him very, very seriously!"

"Jeremy was a huge talent. But I never felt he had a good roll of the dice. There is a theory that you make your own luck but Jeremy never had the best opportunities. He was probably on his finest form ever at Action Workshop and suffered injuries.

"Kristian has inherited his dad's talent, without question. He has that ability to find his way round a track. Choices of line fall quite easily to him. And he's a hungry young man who works hard for what he gets. At the moment Greg is doing excellent work with him. Over the next two years, with a lot of hard work and a bit of guidance, he can get where he wants to be. The people at CCM are very keen to see it through with Kristian. Being in and around professional people should serve him well."





WME!

WEAPON OF MASS ENJOYMENT – THAT'S WHAT OUR KX250 IS GONNA BE WHEN WE FINALLY GET AROUND TO WHEELING IT OUT OF THE STU-STU-STUDIO AND ONTO THE DIRT (IF HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS ALLOW IT)...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

This is my dirt bike. There are many like it but this one is mine. My dirt bike is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. My dirt bike without me is useless. Without my dirt bike I am useless. I must ride my dirt bike true. I must ride harder than my enemy who is trying to ride harder than me. I will learn its weaknesses, its strengths, its parts, its accessories and its barrel. I will ever guard it against the ravages of weather and damage. I will keep my dirt bike clean and ready, even as I am clean and ready. We will become part of each other. We will...

If you've ever watched the movie Full Metal Jacket or spent time in the US Marine Corps you'll realize that I've ripped off that entire first paragraph and replaced the word rifle with the words bike and dirt. But for many disciples of dirt bike riding those words ring true and if they don't then you're probably not getting the most from your bike or indeed your riding.

So after collecting the very latest incarnation of the magazine machine – a 2008 model KX250 – from Kawasaki Motors UK, the first port of call for our dirt bike of choice was not our not-so local track but the DBR studio/workshop area so we could strip 'er right down and fully prep it for a tough half-season of racing action ahead.

Off-road bikes whether you're ready to admit it or not are most likely the most important, expensive but abused piece of equipment you own. With a brand new dirt scoot costing in the region of three to five grand can you think of anything else of that value that you'd sling around in a muddy field, wash off with soap and water, spray some WD-40 in the general direction of and then leave propping up your shed wall for the next seven days?

Of course, modern dirt bikes are designed and constructed in such a way that they can and will withstand that kind of abuse but like anything else of value they work better and more efficiently when there's been a decent amount of preparation and care shown toward them. This care should ideally begin the moment you pick up your new weapon from your local dealer as a little time spent fettling your prized possession now will pay dividends both performance wise and financially later. >>





When you get your hands on a new bike – even if it's used and only new to you – it's well worth picking up your spanners and giving it a good once over before going for a spin. It's not breaking news that motorcycle manufacturers are a wee bit tight when it comes to greasing up the pivots and bearings of a new bike and a few hours spent disassembling, greasing and refitting is little hardship for the long-term benefits gained. And while your bike's stripped down it's possible to bolt on a little bling too so it's a win-win situation.

My original plan was to try and build the ultimate two-stroke race bike – not ultimate in the sense that it would be a 450-killing, fire-breathing beast but more in the way that it would be useful for MX, off-road racing and enduro too. The ultimate all-rounder if you will. And Kawasaki's KX250 is a great place to start.

I guess the idea originally popped into my head while I was ricocheting a Fast Eddy replica RM250 around the indoor motocross track at Wheeldon Farm (www.wheeldontwo.co.uk).

Suzuki UK it seemed had created a bit of a monster based around their stock RM250 that not only was a lot of fun to ride around the rain-soaked Devonshire trail network but was equally at home barking down the roof on the indoor supercross-style circuit.

While the Fast Eddy replica RM250 is a limited edition dirt cycle it's still basically a mass-produced weapon and therefore a little bit middle of the road. With our project it's possible to do what we damn well please – and that includes definitely not running a headlamp – so we got on the phone to discuss the possibilities with some of the UK's leading aftermarket parts distributors to see what could be done to pimp our ride.

One of the most respected parts pushers in the British off-road scene is Roland Shaw of Hardcore Racing who imports a plethora of leading-brand tuning products to the UK. For our KX250 Roland recommended we fit a Steahly flywheel weight, VHM cylinderhead, full HGS exhaust system, VForce3 reed valve and continued to run the Haan wheels we bagged

for our KX450F last year.

Flywheel weights are quite uncommon in motocross but an almost must-have product for enduro and trail riding where the increased inertia helps improve drive and traction. Fitting a flywheel weight to the KX250 is easy as pie and it's just a matter of ripping off the flywheel cover, cracking the nut that holds the flywheel in place (you may need an impact driver for this) and then replacing the nut that holds the flywheel on with the weight itself. Tighten to the correct torque with the special tool that comes with the kit and Robert is your mother's brother.

Equally as simple to fit is the two-piece VHM cylinderhead. Drain the coolant, remove the spark plug, remove the old cylinder head, replace the o-rings and fit the new much sexier machined head and spark plug, torque it down, refill the coolant and off you go. The VHM heads have various easily-inserted combustion chambers that allow you to fine tune your engine's innards for different track conditions.

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WE LOVE...

A big thanks must go to Paul 'Lovebox' Cross and Alex 'Bruiser' Brawn at Kawasaki Motors UK (www.kawasaki.co.uk) for the loan of the bike, Jason Bagladi at Evoke Concepts (www.evoke-concepts.com) for all the outstanding pre-printed product he supplies us with, Roland at Hardcore Racing (www.mxpowers.org.uk), Adam at Madison (www.ultimatepursuits.co.uk), Matt and Dale at DSM Off-road (www.sixsixone.com), Dave at RaceFX (www.race-fx.com) for the big box of Ipone lubricants (www.ipone.fr) we'll be using in the coming months and Wayne D at Fox Europe (www.foxeuropa.com) for posting out the protective clothing that'll be saving our collective arses in the near future.



leader for a few years now and actually come fitted as standard on the KTM two-stroke range. Roland reckons this product should be the first thing off the shelf for all serious two-stroke racers as the VForce reed valve promises to increase power throughout the range and increase throttle response – sweet!

The Dutch know a thing or two about tuning motocross bikes as the power-sapping sand that they race in means engine performance is key. HGS exhausts are among the best in the world for European motocross and enduro type conditions and they're built to last which is why we chose to run one on our Kawasaki.

Also constructed in Holland and built to last are the HAAN wheels we first ran on our KX450F in 2007. Seeing as though they slot straight into our 250 two-stroke it'd be rude not to give 'em a run out this year too seeing as they're so sweet looking and require the most minimal of maintenance.

Looks wise I'm already a big fan of the KX250 and I always have been ever since I

realized you could ride one in the Playstation 2 game Freestyle: Metal-X! Monster Energy graphics courtesy of Factory Effex – available from a Madison-supplied dealer near you – along with premier quality pre-printed custom backgrounds from Evoke Concepts take care of the cosmetics while a whole host of trinkets from Zeta Racing – again available from a Madison-supplied dealer – finish the look.

Zeta Racing products are made with love in Japan and it really shows in both their quality and fit. While none of the covers, washers or even the rear brake pivot are an essential must-have product there's no denying they do help make things look much sweeter. It's well worth checking out www.zeta-racing.com to see some of the awesome products they create – see this month's Stuff section too! – before logging on to www.ultimatepursuits.co.uk to see which of your local dealers carry the parts you'll find yourself needing in stock.

Adam at Madison also hooked me up with a high performance forged Wiseco piston for

fitment later – more about that next month – along with some other bits and bobs which I'm not willing to show you just yet. Patience Grasshopper!

For the last three years I've been lucky enough to use Sunline levers and this year is no different. I love the way they feel in my fingers and their full adjustability makes them a dream to use as I sometimes feel standard bend levers are too close to the handlebars for someone with my size of hands. The Sunline levers allow you to fully customize their position. I also have some Sunline Revolver handguards to fit but like the piston I'm gonna save those for a later date.

With the build complete there's only one thing to go and do now and that's ride the beast. With the Ken Winstanley-owned and Justin Wilson/Wayne Braybrook-operated Abram Moto Park being situated just down the M6 the plan is to get editor Lawless and art editor Marge out riding with me so the hours – and breakages – should mount up in no time. We'll keep you updated on those next month!

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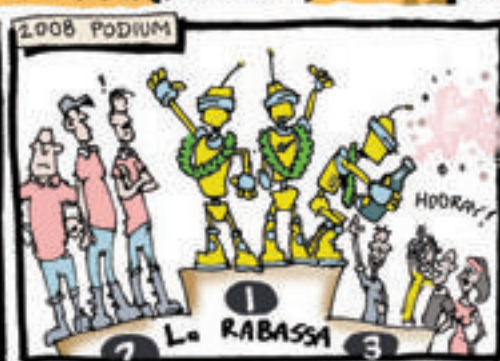
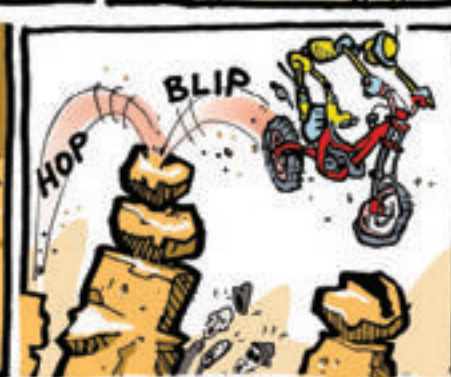
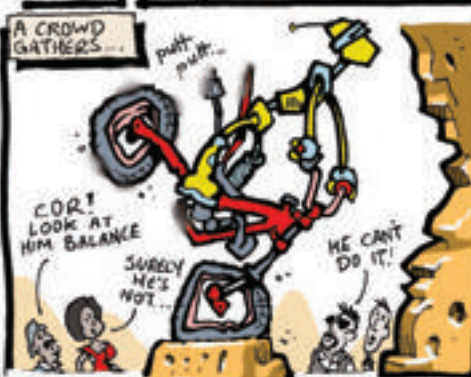
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RACING

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

THE YOUNG ONES!

LIFE AIN'T EASY WHEN YOU'RE 15 YEARS OLD – AND IT GETS EVEN HARDER WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE GP MOTOCROSS SCENE...

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Meg and Mel are the latest in a long line of nipper rippers taken under Steve Dixon's wing



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SCHOOL'SOUT!

WHO NEEDS AN EDUCATION WHEN YOU'RE GONNA BE A GP STAR?

Mel: "I was getting more aggro from coming in one day and not the next so they told me just to leave. But compulsory school attendance ended yesterday anyway."

"I didn't take any exams, so I don't have any qualifications but it doesn't worry me, not at all. My dad has a business – MGP Steel – they put up big steel-framed buildings and also make startgates for many tracks in the UK so I can always work there if it all goes wrong. My family is fully behind me."

Megan: "I'm a year below Mel so I'm supposed to still go for another year but I left a couple of months ago. I went in to talk to the headmaster...now I just go out riding as much as I can."

"I've only got one shot at doing this as a professional motocross rider but I can always go back and learn what I need to. I was in all my top classes and I found maths really easy but I've thrown it all away."

Mel: "So what's seven times seven?"

Megan: "40-something."



© Suttly

Mel's proving to be a potential star in the making



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At 15 Megan's already one of the UK's top female racers

Life's tough at the top when you're 15 – even Tony Cairoli struggled at that age – but there can be no doubt that the experience of riding with the best at that age pays dividends in the long run. And no-one does more to give GP opportunities to the younger UK generation than Steve Dixon's Utag Yamaha squad.

Steve's latest teenies on the world trail are Mel Pocock and Megan Lewis, both 15-year-olds and both with a burning desire to succeed. "It's a lot more interesting to work with youngsters, trying to bring them along and see results which you have built rather than just go out and buy a rider. We paid good money for [Andrew] McFarlane and took him to his first win but we also took Billy [Mac] to his first win," explains Steve. "We had eight good years with Billy and we still have a good relationship and I believe we achieved all that we could achieve together, apart from winning a world championship. I took Dougan at 14, Billy at 14, Martin Barr at 14, Nunny at 16 and now Mel and Megan at 15."

So how does he rate Mel and Megan?

"Both of them are very young. They're both young 15-year-olds and they are proving quite hard mentally to get through to. They have skill but it will be a bit slower. They're still getting

scared, they're still in awe about the whole situation at GPs. When Mel went back to the youth class a few weeks ago he won easily but there is a step of several years to the GPs. I think they can both do it though."

The team is spread along the south coast – the Pocock's residence is at East Hoathley near Eastbourne while the Lewis clan hail from Fareham and the Dixon workshop is about midway between the two. But the kids have known each other for several years.

"We know each other from youth MX," says Mel. "We first met at Matchams when we were both riding Big Wheel 85s." Mel was finishing top three and Megan? "Top 30 but not bottom three," she claims. "I was the only girl in the class and I still am." And now they're both GP riders. "Trying to be," says Mel. So how did it come about?

"One Thursday afternoon we were getting ready to go to the Elite and Steve rang up to say 'pack your bags, we're going to Portugal'," says Mel. "It was quite a big jump, initially my plans this year were to race the BYMX and the KWS schoolboy series and in the adults the Under 21 plus a few Maxxis if I was doing good enough but I got chucked in straight away at the Maxxis and then here at the GPs."

"A big jump, coming from nowhere really, but

I've got no regrets. I've been missing youth races and losing any chance of the titles but it's worth it. I've been thrown in at the deep end but I haven't drowned yet. I've been keeping my head above water."

"In Portugal the heat was immense so it wasn't easy for me. I think I got overwhelmed by the heat race but I loved the track. I'd never ridden anything like that – it flowed so nice. The jumps were massive but I didn't get overawed by them. On the Friday I just looked at the track and thought to myself 'I'm going to have fun out there'."

"It was certainly different to schoolboy motocross which is like riding round a field with a few jumps, a few berms and loads of rocks. I think the only thing in the UK which prepares you for that is the Elite Youth Cup series. They do make a lot of effort with the tracks but that is very much a stand-out thing in the schoolboys and I think they'll take over as the premier series on the youth scene."

"Bulgaria was an awesome track up and down the hills, wide open – but I landed on a haybale in the heat when it jumped out at me and I went over the bars."

"Italy was hard work, it was like an overgrown SX track with sand. I got a good >>>

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start there but faded out in the end. But running top 12 was a real thrill. I got really excited, I think that's why I faded – I just got so excited that I was there.

"Mallory was a bit disappointing. I had hoped I could qualify there and I am getting closer every week. My jump was terrible, I was last but I came round the inside of the first corner and sneaked up the inside. I was about seventh and sat in eighth for a few laps but then I got excited and faded again.

"But I feel like I am making progress and it shows when I go back to the UK. I just feel so much more comfortable, coming from a GP to the British championship. I've learnt to use more of the track. It's not just racing from one corner to the next, it's about building a rhythm,

"We girls just have to train twice as hard to keep up with the boys. But there's one kid I used to race in the Small Wheels and he used to lap me but I beat him when we raced together last weekend which really pleased me."

Despite equal opportunities there are still relatively few teenage girls racing MX in mixed competition. "I'm the only girl in the main class at the Elite Youth Cup. There are more girls in the smaller classes but most girls just practice. You have to be more serious about it as a girl if you want to get on. If you weren't you wouldn't do it at all. But motocross is my life and I wouldn't change it for the world!"

The counter-attractions of adult lifestyles – sex, drugs and rock n' roll – see a host of competitors drift away from the sport in their late



Megan's only world championship points so far this year have come in Bulgaria



Mel hasn't made the cut yet – but he's still hanging it out

swooping wide sometimes to line yourself up for the next turn and so on. The GP tracks are just so wide."

Mel's first bike was a PW50 which Mel Senior bought him at the tender age of three-and-a-half and the 2007 Elite champion has been racing since the tender age of six. But Megan's career started just four years ago on the same day father Nick hung up his racing boots. But not through old age or injury...

"When I first started I was on a Honda 85 and we went to practice at Matchams," says Megan. "Dad had been riding for five or six years and had a 250F and told me to follow him for a couple of laps 'and we'll see how you get on' but I passed him at the first corner!"

Nick meekly admits the truth. "I initially bought a bike for fun for green laning but when she left me standing in the dust I decided to give Megan the bike instead."

Actual racing soon followed. "I was usually top 10 in club races, then I tried somebody's KTM and I thought it was really good so I went to the Big Wheel 85. I rode a couple of nationals, winning the supports."

It's a time-honoured fact that girls are actually physically stronger than boys of the same age prior to puberty but the scenario is soon reversed as they become teenagers and that inevitably leads to a lot of frustration for the tender sex but Megan refuses to be disheartened.

teens but Mel points to another poignant cause. "You get people who crash and hurt themselves and say 'stuff that, I'm not going to do that again'. It takes a lot to get back on after a big crash."

Having taken to the world scene, Megan made the racing at the opening round of the Women's series in Bulgaria – even scoring two points – but has been on the wrong side of the cut since.

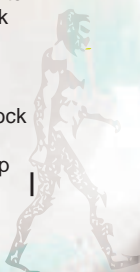
"There are only a couple of other 15-year-olds – the rest are older. In a few years I want to be top five in the world and next year I want to be British champion in the girls. I want to do German rounds too, the competition there is really good with so many of their girls in the world top 20. It is going to happen. I'm going to push myself until it does!"

Mel also has clear aims. "This year I would like to at least qualify for one GP, maybe two if I can get the hang of it. Then next year I want to qualify more regularly and also get some top 10s in the British championship. My present deal with Steve is for this year only but I want to stay with him next year if I can. I'd like to think that I have progressed this year to being a semi-professional motocross rider but I'm looking at making a career out of it."

And Mel will probably not be the only Pocock on the world trail in a couple of years time – younger brother Bradley is currently ripping up the tracks in the BW85s...



Steve Dixon has played a major role in bringing on UK youth talent



THE
YOUNG
ONERS



Nico Aubin was one of the pre-season favourites but up until South Africa had failed to make his presence felt

THE GREAT HOPE?

NICOLAS AUBIN – RICCI RACING YAMAHA

Winner of the Czech GP last year, Nicolas Aubin started as one of the favourites to win the 2008 MX2 world championship. But so far this year the 20-year-old Yamaha rider has had just one heat win in Italy and has struggled with up and down results.

Still, he remains one of the best riders in the class and will be again one of Yamaha's main riders next season in MX2...

DBR: We can imagine that you're not so happy with your results so far this year?

NA: "That's for sure. My goal was to battle for the podium and I'm currently sixth in the standings after Sweden. The pre-season was great for me, I won in Italy and France, I was taking holeshots and everything was going well until the GPs started.

"Valkenswaard was not so bad even if I lost time when I crashed with Searle and then in Spain I was leading the second heat until I was stopped on the uphill step section. In Portugal and Bulgaria I finished fourth in one race and then came Italy. I spent the week before the GP in Italy, won the first heat okay but in the second one I was unable to finish in the top five. That's my main problem at the moment – the consistency. The worst came in Germany where I couldn't find a good rhythm and I only scored three points."

DBR: You race the GPs on a 250 and the French series on a 450. Does that create a problem?

NA: "I don't think so. I've always practised on a 450

during the season. I like this bike a lot. Last year I won the MX2 French championship and to have some new motivation I decided this season to compete in the MX1 class in France. It's great to race with Seb Pourcel – when you battle with him for 30 minutes that's the best training there is. But I know that Michele Rinaldi is not so happy with the idea..."

DBR: You're racing with Ricci Yamaha at the moment but there are some rumours that the team could move to KTM – will this affect you?

NA: "Illario Ricci – the team owner – informed me about the situation a few weeks ago. I feel at home in this team, they don't put me under any pressure and always provide me with a great bike. I have a two-year contract with Yamaha Europe so for sure I will have to find a solution for next season if Ricci goes orange. I don't want to go to a satellite team such as Dixon or Van Beers so we'll see with Michele and Yamaha Europe how things will go."

DBR: What are your goals for the end of this season?

NA: "To come back to at least fourth in the standings even if it will be difficult as Shaun Simpson is now 50 points ahead. I must be focused on the races from the first practice session on Saturday as I qualified through the last chance in Germany and Sweden. When you have a bad qualification it's difficult to have a good start in the races and everyone knows how important it is to start well in this class."



La REVOLUTION!

THE FRENCH SEEM TO BE THE NEW BIG THINGS IN MX2 WITH ALMOST HALF OF THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOP 15 POSITIONS BEING HELD BY LE THROTTLE JOCKEYS FRANCAIS

Sutty and Pascal Haudiquert made this...

Break down the nationalities of the top 15 riders in the MX2 world motocross championship and you'll see there are three Italians, three Brits, only one Portugeezer, South African and Belgian but no fewer than six French riders.

As the emerging force in world motocross talent the Frenchies have got it covered and while most of the other nine riders on the list of those who receive the Youthstream travel allowance for the overseas GP in South Africa are considered veterans of the

sport, the French kids are mostly young guns!

With this in mind we tracked down the leading seven stars of the French MX2 scene – the six in the top 15 and European champ Gautier Paulin who has slipped to 17th place through injury – to find out more about each of them. The scary thing is that behind this seven are another batch of freshly brewed Frenchies – including Loic Larrieu and Valentin Teillet – ready to take points in GP competition once they've made their way through the European championship.

FACTORY PILOT!

XAVIER BOOG – INOTEC SUZUKI

Two years after making his GP debut, Xavier Boog was selected by Sylvain and Eric Geboers to join the factory Suzuki team this season. Calm and reserved, Xavier confirmed his potential aboard the brand-new yellow 250F by scoring fourth overall in both Bulgaria and France. He renewed his contract for '09 with Suzuki in Germany and 'XoBo' will once more be leader of the Suzuki assault on the MX2 series.

DBR: You never raced the European series and came straight from the French junior championship to the GPs. Was it the right choice?

XB: "I think so and I have no regrets even though I've not got much experience when I race at the front of the pack and maybe it would be easier if I had battled for the win in the European series before coming to the GPs? For sure when you arrive in the GPs without any international experience it's not easy – especially when you don't qualify – but I'm still there today."

DBR: You're now in your third year in MX2 – what can you say about the last two seasons?

XB: "I started as second rider in the Casola-PSM team alongside Anthony Boissière. It was a learning season for me and a difficult year for the team who stopped at the end of the season. With my father I decided to go as a privateer – always with Yamaha – and I got some decent results with a strong performance in the last GP at Lierop. It was the right time to shine as after this GP I got an offer from Suzuki."

DBR: You started the season on a new bike – are you satisfied so far with your results?

XB: "My goal was to be in the top 10 this year so I'm satisfied. Do Suzuki and the Inotec team expect to be there? I think so and I'm sure they're happy with our results. I work with the same physical trainer as Seb Pourcel and I worked hard in winter time to improve my physical shape. Suzuki work hard too, we get some new parts at each GP and the staff at Suzuki have regular meetings with my mechanic to improve the bike. In France we got a new linkage for our suspension and it was a good improvement – the bike is much more stable."

DBR: You just narrowly missed out on two GP podiums finishing fourth both times – are you disappointed?

XB: "Not at all as being fourth is also a good result. But for sure I'm now expecting my first podium as I proved that I have a good speed and rhythm. I know where my problem is, I'm not fast enough during the first part of the race and my starts are not so great. Sometimes I also think too much about the points, like in St Jean where I followed Tarroux and Boissière for the entire race. I think I need to be more aggressive so I can pass my rivals easier and I can't wait for Lommel because I love riding on sandy tracks."

DBR: You are really fast on a 450 but you've decided to continue in the MX2 class, why is this?

XB: "Last year I did some international races in Germany on a 450 and I loved it. My riding style is smooth and it's perfect for a 450 so I was thinking about moving to this class already last year before I got the offer from Suzuki. I've decided to do one more season in the MX2 class as I'm sure I can do better, I'm only 20 years old so there's time to move to MX1 later."



Xavier Boog is pushing for his first podium





In only his second season of GPs Steven Frossard has become a hot prospect

BREAKING THROUGH...

STEVEN FROSSARD – CLS KAWASAKI

Runner-up in the 2006 European championship, Steven Frossard entered the GPs for the first time last season with the CLS team. Injuring his wrist at the fourth round in Italy he made it back for the last few rounds of the championship but was unable to score any significant results with his painful wrist. After training hard all winter and building his confidence – despite some technical problems earlier in the year – Steven has become one of the main rivals to the factory riders. Scoring his first ever podium in Germany one month ago it seems that Frossard is ready to break through to the big time.

DBR: It took a while for you to collect your first podium.

SF: "For sure I was expecting better results in the first part of the season but things were not going as expected. My goal has always been to finish the campaign in the top eight but the first GPs were difficult. We had several technical failures – such as the clutch in the Netherlands and brakes in Spain – and I think that's because we didn't test enough during winter time.

"After Bulgaria I was unhappy as I knew it was important to get good results to secure a good ride for '09, then I started to post my first good results of the season in Italy and backed that up at Mallory Park two weeks later."

DBR: England was an important event for you and you challenged Tommy Searle during the second heat...

SF: "Yeah, I proved that with a good start I have the speed to battle out front but I've known this since the beginning of the season as I posted several good results during the qualifying races and in free practice.

"I had a great start in the second heat at Mallory and I was ready to attack Tommy for second place even if I only did one lap in front of him. My team asked me to ride safe and I followed their advice as it was important for me and for them to secure a good result. But if they hadn't asked me I was ready to try and pass Tommy!"

DBR: For a while you struggled to put two good races together on the same weekend. How did you overcome it?

SF: "We worked a lot on this problem in practice and hopefully we've found the solution. After three races with one good heat [fifth in Italy, third in England and fifth again in France] I reached my goal in Germany and had two good ones. I was dreaming of a podium result for a long time and in Teutschenthal I did two good races and got it. It's the first step, now my goal is to collect other podiums and next year to battle for the top three. I know what I have to do this winter."

DBR: With such great results during only your second GP campaign you must have plenty of good offers for next season...

SF: "Yes but my first choice is to stay with Kawasaki and CLS. I'm happy in this team, there's a great atmosphere and even if we don't have factory material we proved that our bikes are good thanks to Jerome Salhi [former Rinaldi mechanic] who works closely with CLS."





COMEBACK KID!

ANTHONY BOISSIERE – KTM HDI

Winner of two GP heats in 2005 – one in France and one in South Africa – Anthony Boissiere was considered by Yamaha Europe as one of the main prospects for the future. But 'Toto' had a difficult 2006 season with CLS Kawasaki and lost his way a little bit. Increasing in confidence throughout 2007, Anthony joined the KTM HDI team for '08 and rebounded to winning form in Spain – dominating his qualification heat – and scored a podium finish in his home GP at St Jean d'Angely.

DBR: Anthony, you won two GP heats in 2005 then appeared to drop off the radar a little bit. What exactly happened?

AB: "I injured my ankle early in the 2006 season and I had trouble with it all year long. People in the team never really trusted me and our confidence went away. I lost motivation to go training, then I didn't qualify for some GPs and it was a difficult period for me. Sometimes I was ready to stop motocross but thankfully I had some good people around me and mentally I'm a fighter and I decided to continue. But it was tough in '05 because so many people came around me after my wins but in '06 when I wasn't doing so well I was alone in the truck. You learn a lot about people at this time."

DBR: 2007 got a little better with CLS and '08 is even better still...

AB: "Last year we worked in a good atmosphere, even if we had some misunderstandings with Mickael Maschio who was our coach. I got some decent results, worked hard and I found some confidence back. During the winter I moved to KTM HDI and worked hard all winter with Fred Bezombes – the team manager who is a former MX rider. I knew that '08 was my last chance, I had only one offer – from HDI – and I'm happy in this family team where we work in good conditions. We have the support of KTM France and I've got an SXS which is a really good bike."

DBR: Before France did you think it was possible to return to the podium?

AB: "When I won my qualifying race in Spain I realised that it was possible even if my results were not so good during the races in the mud. Then I scored top 10 results in Portugal, Bulgaria and England but after Mallory I had a strange feeling during the week and didn't feel too confident coming in to France."

"But I was able to ride two strong races and I claimed the third podium finish of my career. The feeling was even better than in '05 because after 2006 I was wondering if I would ever get another one! Now I have to be more consistent – at some races I'm not fast or strong enough and that's a point we're working on in the team."

DBR: Next season will be your last year in MX2 because of the new rules – what do you think about them?

AB: "It's not logical – some riders aren't the right size to go on a 450 and I can't understand why riders are not free to decide which class they will race in. Personally, I don't know what I can expect in MX1 as I have never raced or practised seriously with a 450."

After a couple of disappointing seasons Anthony Boissiere is getting back to his '05 form





Marvin Musquin is a candidate for rookie of the year

MARV ATTACKS!

MARVIN MUSQUIN – HONDA NGS

Only 18 years old, Marvin is probably the 'rookie of the year' especially since Gautier Paulin got injured. Fast but inconsistent in last year's MX2 European series, the double French SX champion is one of the most promising French prospects and potent on a motocross or supercross track.

DBR: There was a lot of talk last winter when you switched from Bud Kawasaki to Honda NGS – are you happy so far with your results?

MM: "Totally, it was a good move for me and it helped my brother to have a chance to compete in the GPs. It's good to practice together, even if unfortunately he had to stop his GP campaign. I have a great relationship with Bruno Losito – the manager of the team who is also my physical trainer – and with Honda Martin.

"When they offered us the possibility to use their engine it was great news even if our bike was already fast. We have good suspension thanks to Jean Marie Hacking and great engine thanks to Paolo and his staff. With their help we can prove that the Honda has good potential in this class."

DBR: Last year you impressed the pits with sixth place in Faenza but this year seems to be more difficult for you?

MM: "Faenza is a hardpack track and I had a great start which helped me so much! In Germany I got a fifth place in the second heat and that's my best result – but I'm pretty happy so far with my performances.

"During the first part of the season I only scored in one heat per race due to some troubles like stalling the engine but since Mallory I've had no DNFs and have always finished in the top 14. I have made some mistakes – like a crash in Sweden – and my goal now is to have two strong races to get a GP podium. Anthony Boissière and Steven Frossard have already got one and we're fighting together in the French championship so it's now one of my next goals."

DBR: You're particularly thin – does that affect your physical training?

MM: "In the past I did nothing special. I started working seriously last winter when I met Bruno. He has a lot of experience and he built a good programme for me. I was happy in Sweden to be so fresh after the second heat as I pushed hard to recover after my crash in the first race. I've moved from La Réole – near Bordeaux – to Le Havre where I rent an apartment, it's more convenient for me as I'm close to the team."

DBR: What about the des Nations at Donington, would you like to be there on the French team?

MM: "That's a dream, as America is too. I've known Olivier Robert – the French team manager – for a while as I've been in the French Hopeful team. He always comes to give me some advice when he comes to the GPs. For sure I would like to be there but there are a lot of good French riders in the MX2 class and maybe it's too early for me this year? I'm ready to go but if I'm not called up in '08 maybe it will be in Italy next year."

EURO FIGHTER!

GAUTIER PAULIN – MOLSON KAWASAKI

Without a doubt Gautier Paulin was one of the revelations of the 2007 season as he produced a couple of strong performances at the GPs where he came in as a wild card and he of course won the European MX2 title. Moving from Honda Martin to Molson Kawasaki during the winter, Gautier came to the GPs with a lot of pressure on his young shoulders and unfortunately broke his collarbone at the French GP. The youngest of our French stars – aged just 18 – Gautier's expected to return for the deep sand of the Belgian GP at Lommel.

DBR: For the first time this season you had really good practice sessions in Saint Jean d'Angely but then came this crash in your qualifying race!

GP: "I was satisfied with my lap times in the free and pre-qualifying sessions and in the race I got a good start and was second in the second corner. Unfortunately my rear wheel slid and I crashed, one rider jumped on me and broke my collarbone so I've been off for several weeks. I'm disappointed because for the first time this season everything was going perfectly and I made a silly mistake."

DBR: Your season has not been as good as you could expect. How are your levels of motivation?

GP: "I have no problems with motivation so don't worry. The main problem for me was the injury at the Valence International and it really damaged my preparation. Then I was pretty unlucky with some technical troubles such as Italy where I broke the front brake and also the footpeg without crashing and then with Cairoli who crashed just in front of me in Bulgaria – I hit his bike and broke my front brake disc.

"I had some tough races like in Valkenswaard because I'm not used to the sand and then Bellpuig in the mud but I'm making huge amounts of progress this year and that's why I still have strong motivation. I proved during the first race in Bulgaria that with a good start I can finish in the top five – I just need now to have some good luck or at least not so much bad luck."

DBR: When things are not going as you, Jacky or your team expects what do you do?

GP: "Of course sometimes I have many questions in my head as I know that they invest in me to get good results. I spoke a lot with Jacky Vimond – he is my trainer but also my confidante – and he has such a lot of experience. I know what I can do when I practice during the week and I saw in Bulgaria what I can expect with a good start so I know that I can do much better and I'm working on this."

DBR: Would you say that the step between the European and the world championship is huge?

GP: "You can't really compare these championships but I'm sure that the best school is the European series. But that's only a step and when you arrive in the GPs you have to work hard. The main difference for me comes from the riders who are much more experienced and from the tracks which are more technical and physical. Last year when I found a good line I could use it for the entire race, this year when I find a good one it doesn't exist anymore one lap later! The GP riders have an open mind and try many things on the tracks."



A broken collarbone has derailed Gautier's '08 campaign

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Jeremy Tarroux's looking to finished the season inside the top 10



SILVER SURFER!

JEREMY TARROUX – SILVER ACTION KTM

The second oldest member of the MX2 French squad, Jeremy Tarroux is also one of the most experienced riders and he went through some tough seasons before he got a good ride in the GPs. Riding in his second year for the Silver Action KTM squad, you might remember Jeremy as the man who beat Tommy in moto one at Donington last year!

DBR: You nearly won the British GP last year and everyone was expecting more podiums for you this season – what's happening?

JT: "My main problem is that I seriously damaged my shoulder last year and I had surgery in winter time. It was not easy as the shoulder has already been damaged in the past and it took me more or less four months to recover. I came to the first few races unprepared and then it's never easy as the level is really high in the GPs. I've also crashed several times during races – in Castelnau de Lévis for the MX3 French Grand Prix, then in Spain and also in Sweden."

DBR: The first part of the season was not so good but since Italy you're looking better and better.

JT: "That's true. My best GP so far was France where I finished runner-up behind Searle in the first race. I had a good feeling with the track but unfortunately I crashed during the second race and missed out on the podium. Then I went to the final round of the Italian championship, I won the race with a first and a second position but Monni got the title – he's a little faster than I. It was a good result for the team and KTM Italy. Then in Germany and Sweden I finished every heat in the top 15 and I entered the top 15 in the championship before South Africa. I'm happy to go there – it will be the first time that I've raced in an overseas GP"

DBR: What are your goals for the last part of the season?

JT: "The team expects me to be in the top 10 at the end of the series and that's also my goal too. If I can finish regularly in the top 10 then it's possible."

DBR: And what about the future?

JT: "We have to talk with the team, they want to keep me and I'm waiting for their offer. Our KTMs are working great but we need to have some stability with the mechanics as there have been several changes and each time you need to build a relationship with your mechanic during the season. Otherwise I have some other offers – we'll see soon."

THE PLAN!

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS...

In 1991 the French equivalent of the ACU – the FFM – built a national hopefuls team and employed former 250cc world champion Jacky Vimond as trainer/manager. From that day Jacky started to work with some young promising kids including Mickael Maschio (125cc world champion), Sébastien Tortelli (two-time world champion), Luigi Seguy (125cc GP winner), Stéphane Roncada (US 125 SX champion) and David Vuillemin (SX world champion).

Over the years several trainers replaced Jacky at the head of the French team including Patrick Boniface, Jean Jacques Bruno and now Olivier Robert who are all former French champions and GP contenders. Nowadays the team has eight riders and some of them – Livia Lancelot, Loïc Larrieu, Valentin Teillet and Loïc Rombaut – are already well known. These kids go on training camps during the year where they share experience and train together with the advice of the manager, trainer and doctor of the federation who also give some financial support to the members of the team who do the European series.

With the exception of Gautier Paulin all the riders featured in this article are products of the French hopeful squad. Isn't it time the ACU coaxed on our homegrown talent?





THOUGHTFILTER!

IF IT'S SO EASY FOR YOUR BRAIN TO TRICK YOU INTO A NEGATIVE STATE THEN SURELY THE OLD GREY MATTER CAN FOOL YOU INTO RIDING FASTER AS WELL?

Words by Neil Drew

The words that we speak are like an external window to the inner workings of the mind – they give away our thinking which in turn is linked to and influences how we feel. One of the many areas that are covered when I train a person in using their mind in more productive ways is that of becoming aware of whatever it is that we say because of the profound effect that it has on our actions and behaviour, beliefs and attitudes.

Before we look at a few examples it is important to understand a little more of how the mind actually works and why it plays tricks on us. Our minds are bombarded with information about the outside world – temperature, feelings, sounds, sights, smells, tastes etc – but our awareness of the world around us tends to be limited to whatever it is that we are paying attention to at any exact moment. So what of the other information that is available to our brains that is ignored?

Well, what the brain does is to filter out information about what is predictable and familiar because it is just that – predictable and familiar – and therefore doesn't require our attention. Look at it this way, when you go into a strange airport your focus is on everything around you – the scenery, the people, signs and so on. Now think about when you hear a loud noise that you weren't expecting – your focus goes straight to that noise to start processing what created it and to see if it is any threat or not because it is unfamiliar.

Now think about driving on a motorway. There are lots of cars, vans, lorries and the like all moving, the scenery is changing, yet you seem to be able to focus your attention in lots of

different places all at the same time. That's because your brain has references for and experience of ignoring the scenery and focusing on the relative positions of other vehicles around you – it can predict certain movements and what is going to happen when someone turns on their indicators to change lane. So how is it that the brain does this? What it does is to delete and generalize information that is presented to it by way of filtering through the information to find matches that make the information predictable. It will then generalize it and delete that which it is familiar with and therefore predictable.

Time for the examples now and we hope that you fully understand the concept of the way that the mind works – if not just read that last section again until you do because it is important to grasp the concept.

How many times do you say something along the lines of "I always ride rubbish at that track"? When saying something like this you're actually distorting what is reality – the brain has just generalized all of your experiences at that track and deleted information about any form of success. Do you always ride every single part of that track "rubbish"? I bet you've ridden certain parts of that track well and others not so well. You might have to really think hard and dig deep into the memory banks but nonetheless the chances are very high indeed that you have had some success, it's just that the brain remembers first of all the memories that it is most familiar with and has the most references for.

So how is this knowledge useful to a competitor? Actually it is very useful – especially if you use this type of phrase. If you hear yourself say something along these lines then

the first thing to do is to question what you've just said and start to recall things that you can use that are positive and will alter your negative perception of either yourself or the venue.

Negative statements create a corresponding negative feeling and attitude and if you've read this article properly and understood it you'll be able to understand how easy it is to become negative about anything. This isn't just about positive thinking – this is actually a science in itself and a powerful one at that. So if it is that easy to create a negative state and therefore a negative attitude it must be just as easy to create a far more positive one that helps to produce better results.

By being aware of what you are saying, what your references are for a venue or the level of challenge that it is or even your opinions of yourself – and understanding the implications of the labels that you put on your experiences – you then have the ability to change them. So instead of viewing and labelling an experience as one of "I hate that track" change it to something like "I love that track" or "that track is a real challenge and I am looking forward to it". Do this and you'll notice a complete difference in how you feel about it which in turn will help you to achieve better things.

You might be reading this as a supporter of someone who is competing and can change the way they feel about themselves or the venue by changing the way that you refer to things – that in itself will go a long way to helping them enjoy their sport and will also help to build their confidence. This takes awareness and practice but the more you do it the easier it gets and eventually it will become second nature.

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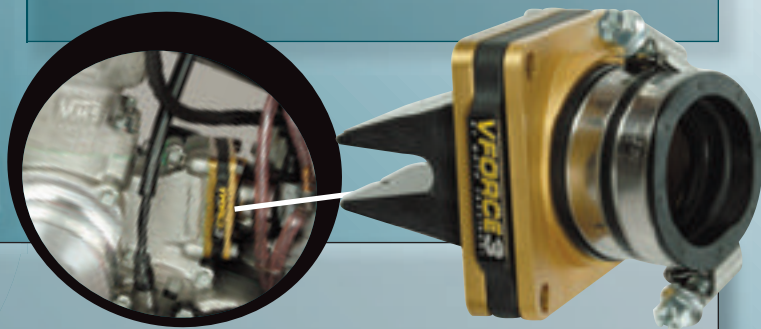
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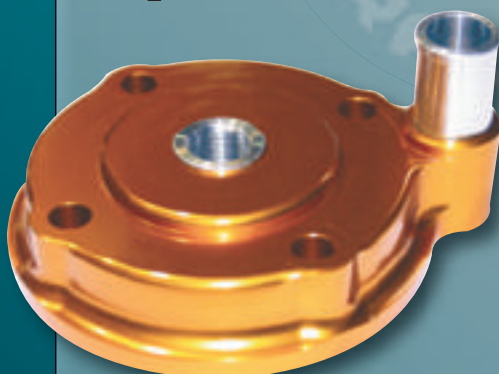


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Jake Weimer is struggling to replicate his indoor form outside but hooking up with Mitch Payton for '09 could be the key to taking it to the next level





ON THE BOIL!

IN HIS THREE YEARS AS A PRO JAKE WEIMER HAS BLOWN HOT AND COLD BUT AFTER SIGNING WITH PRO CIRCUIT KAWASAKI FOR '09 HE KNOWS IT'S TIME TO TURN UP THE HEAT...

In his three years on the AMA tour Jake Weimer has shown flashes of brilliance. Last October he won night two of the US Open against top 450cc riders and then he won round two of the AMA Lites West SX Championship in Phoenix. But just prior to that Weimer failed to make the Main Event at round one.

It's blowing hot and cold like this that led to Weimer hiring a new trainer – Randy Lawrence, the man behind Ryan Villopoto's success – and has also handed him the biggest challenge so far of his young career when next year he moves to the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad. ♦

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene..

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

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DBR: You've been racing pro for three seasons now. How would you compare your career so far to riders who have found immediate success?

JW: "I don't know. It's just one of those things. Some people make it happen right off the bat and some people don't. Unfortunately, I haven't. I don't think it's because of a lack of talent or something like that..."

"You know, it's hard to say exactly what it is because if I knew I'd be winning. But it definitely has something to do with mental games and getting your head straight and being ready to win. That's tough to get right. It's hard to have every piece of the puzzle together and when there's Villopoto, Dungey, Canard... There are other people that have their pieces of the puzzle together so even when you have all your pieces you've got to have a better puzzle, too. It's tough. Right now I think I'm working with good pieces, I just don't have them all together. I think eventually it'll come but it's just tough. It's definitely not the easy way to do it."

DBR: You had a trainer before but you switched to Randy Lawrence. What do you see is the biggest benefit of Randy compared to people you've worked with in the past?

JW: "With Randy he's been a professional athlete himself and he knows what it's like to compete at a high level. He's worked with some great people such as Jeremy McGrath – you may have heard of him – and Ryan Villopoto so he knows what he's talking about."

"I'm sure he wasn't born with it. He's learned a lot by working with a lot of people along the way. He's at a point now where he's smart. He knows racing. He's good with the mental, with the training and what we're trying to do right now is we're trying to pull everything out of me. It's just hard. You get in a comfort zone and you get used to being comfortable all the time and when it's time to give it that extra little push, it's hard."

"You're trying to get out of that comfort zone but you've been in it for so long that it's comfortable so it's hard to get out of it."

DBR: So it's almost like you're soft...

JW: "Yeah! Villopoto doesn't understand. He's always asking me 'dude, what's the problem – why's it so hard for you?' and I'm like 'dude, you don't understand because the motos aren't hard for you'. It's like me going home and riding an Idaho local race! I start wherever, get in the lead, push hard for a while, get a lead and then maintain! It's not hard. I don't get tired."

"His speed enables him to be a little bit nonchalant about it. It's the same thing with Stewart. He gets a lead and then just maintains. It's fun, it's easy, you build confidence at every race..."



Jake's high point outdoors this year came with second overall at, er, High Point

DBR: So it gets easier and easier...

JW: "It does. I went 4-4 at Texas which was good and then I followed that up with a second overall at High Point and that was a high for me. I had the ball rolling but it's hard to keep it rolling once you get there because that's really good for me to get a second because I'm still a work in progress. I'm not quite as fast as Dungey right now and I'm not quite as fast as Trey so for me it's tough to keep that ball rolling and get better and better and better. It definitely makes it hard but eventually the plan is that I'll get there."

DBR: So you won at Phoenix, you won at the US Open – do you think you're a better natural supercross rider than a motocross rider?

JW: "Yeah, supercross definitely comes easier to me. Supercross is where our sport's headed a little bit and I think the manufacturers care a little bit more about it but I would definitely say it's a little easier for me too – not that I don't enjoy outdoors because I do. Motocross is where supercross came from and I enjoy it but it's tougher for me, for sure. It's more my style – my personality in general – it's more laidback and smooth. I'm more calculated and in supercross that works a lot better than it does outdoors."

"The bottom line is that outdoors I have to learn how to hang it out longer and more and I've known that for a long time but that's hard to do. Some people are able to do it, though. You and I have had the conversation that a Ricky Carmichael, a James Stewart or a Ryan Villopoto – if someone's faster than them they're able to push it over their head and match that pace. Some people aren't able to do that. If I ride over my head it's not better – it's probably worse because I'm making mistakes and it's not flowing."

DBR: Sure, you push an extra foot into a turn before you shut off and then it throws your turning speed off and your timing and you lose time rather than gain time...

JW: "Exactly, so it's tough. Currently, I'm a little frustrated. It's tough for me because the whole deal right now is that I ride so well during the week and then I come to the race and I struggle a little bit more than I'm expecting to and I don't know if it's because I'm not bringing 100 per cent to the race or if other people are really stepping it up that much. So, currently, I'm trying to get better on the weekends which is when it counts."

"If the weekday counts then, dude, I'm your guy! I'm one of the top dudes! I don't know what the deal is and it's not something I'm really proud to say because there are a lot of people out there that are good practicers and not very good racers and I don't want to be one. And I think as far as the racing's concerned I'm actually pretty good because a lot of times I'll be ninth fastest and then I'll get a fourth in a moto. But it's about bringing the speed that I have during the week to the races and feeling as comfortable as I do during the week and there's no reason why I shouldn't be able to."



Weimer gets scrubbing at Budds Creek



DBR: Obviously, though, the goal is to win – second is nice but winning is what it's all about, right?

JW: "Yeah, totally. At this point I'm realistic in knowing that a win for me, right now, outdoors is a little bit far-fetched but what keeps me pushing is that I think that I can get there. I think that with the proper tools and getting those pieces together I think that I can get there so that keeps me motivated. But, yeah, the goal is definitely to win and that's the plan for next year. Not that I'm not trying to this year but this year is preparation for next year. It's all about getting better each weekend and trying to learn as much as you can and figure it out."

DBR: Have you ever thought about giving it a run in the GPs? I mean, you raced in Canada...

JW: "No but it's not that I'm opposed to it. I don't think it'd be a bad deal and obviously there's some serious talent over there. I wouldn't be opposed to it but as long as I have a ride and I'm making money in the US...it's home so why go anywhere else?"

DBR: It's common knowledge that you plan to make a switch to the Pro Circuit squad next year. What was the motivation in making that change?

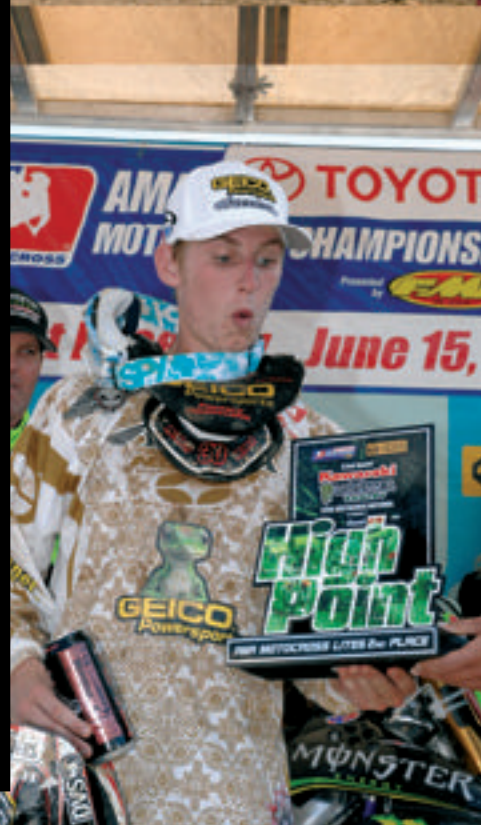
JW: "That's a hard question to answer... I've known Mitch [Payton] for a while, since before I even turned pro. I didn't know him well but I've talked to him and it's all about winning and somehow he's good at steering his riders into winning. I want to win so it's just one of those things where change is sometimes good and exciting and I think it'll be fun to work with Mitch and see what we can make happen."

DBR: Do you really believe that you have what it takes to grab a championship in the next year or two?

JW: "Yeah, for sure – especially in supercross. I'm very confident in supercross and I think that, without a doubt, no matter what bike I'm on I have a chance at winning so I think that next year will be a good year for me. Overall, it'll just be fun to be able to work with Mitch. He's worked with a lot of riders and he's won with a lot of people and I think that it'll be fun to see what happens. At the end of the year we'll know how it is and whether it was a good move or whether it was a bad move."

DBR: Has it been brought up that because Mitch is so successful you have to be successful on that team? Because if you're not people will automatically think 'well, I'm not going to put him on my bike if he couldn't win on Mitch's bike'.

JW: "I'm sure people think that and I definitely could see where you could get that feeling but I think that I'm totally looking past that and it's not about that to me. I want to do good for myself and I'm trying not to look at all of that stuff. I'm looking past that just to say that I want to win and I want to do whatever it takes to win, end of story. Ultimately, worrying about that is only going to make things worse, right? I'm just trying not to worry about it."





GREENSWEEP!

THE AMA NATIONALS IS A FULL-ON KAWASAKI BENEFIT GIG WITH JAMES STEWART AND RYAN VILLOPOTO DOMINATING THEIR CLASSES WITH JUST THREE ROUNDS TO GO...

The 2008 Toyota/AMA MX Nationals have shades of 2004 when Honda's Ricky Carmichael won every single moto of the season (for the second time) and Kawasaki's James Stewart won all but one moto in the 125cc class. Now, only four years later, it's Stewart who has the unbeaten streak going in the 450cc class while Ryan Villopoto has lost only two motos in the Lites class.

At Colorado it's rumoured that Monster Energy Kawasaki's Stewart is nursing a hip injury suffered in practice during the weeks between rounds three and four. The rumour gains credibility when he sits out Friday practice before the Saturday race and is spotted walking with a limp.

By the next race at Red Bud, though, Stewart's injury – if he had one – is long gone as he rides Saturday practice and sets a fastest lap time a full four seconds faster than second place which is Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi. Stewart again dominates the race but the big shake-up in the championship is that Alessi is knocked out of the championship after a brutal crash at the start of the second moto when he goes over the bars and is landed on by multiple riders. At the time Alessi is Stewart's closest rival so the already huge lead that Stewart is enjoying is made even bigger.

Then comes Budds Creek – or 'Bubba's Creek as it used to be known. With Alessi out of the running, Stewart seems to have it

even easier than normal and wins both motos going away once again. However, even though Budds Creek is an easy one for Stewart, the very next week proves to be Stewart's biggest test of the season so far.

When he was on 125s Stewart used to love Unadilla but the last three years have all been disastrous for Stewart at the facility. In 2005 – his first year in the 450cc class (on a two-stroke KX250) – Stewart crashed out famously when he landed on Ricky Carmichael. Then in 2006 and 2007 Stewart crashed out of the race in practice, knocking himself out both times.

So it's understandable that coming up to Unadilla Stewart's more than a little bit wary – after all, he not only has his perfect season on the line but maybe even his first 450cc National MX title. "I was sitting during the week and I looked up New Berlin [Unadilla] for weather and it said it was raining for three days and I really started getting concerned about it," Stewart admits. "It's tough because every time I fell here – except for the time with Ricky [Carmichael, in 2005] – I never knew what happened. I couldn't go back and say 'hey, I went down in the straightaway in the same place where I went down in '06' or 'I went through the same corner where I crashed last year'. I never could pick it out so that was the scariest part."

Ryan Villopoto's only failed
to win two races this season



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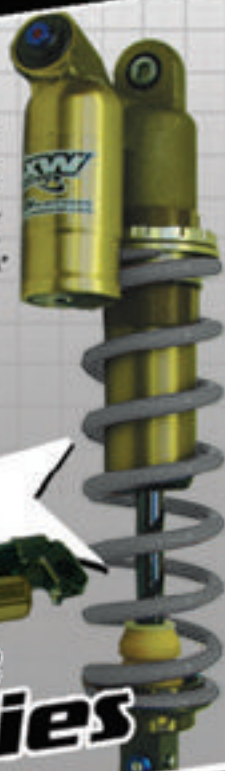


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Stewart wins the first moto in typical fashion but it begins raining extremely heavily before the second moto. Although Stewart gets the holeshot – fighting off New Zealander Cody Cooper to grab it – Cooper stays right on Stewart for most of the race. When the two riders – both about 30 seconds in front of third place – come into lapped riders around the halfway point Stewart gets away but then he falls trying to get around a lapper and gets back up just in front of Cooper again.

"I saw him [Cooper] because I was going down in Screw U and when I was going up he was coming down and I could see him," Stewart says. "He was closing it up and I was just like 'man, if I just ride this pace even if he does catch me he's going to have a hard time passing me'. I know I could pick it up to run his speed or I could go a little faster and maybe roost him and I felt like my endurance was going to kick in and I know I'm in shape... Then, when I fell, he got close again in those lappers and I was like 'dude, just calm down, ride in your zone and let your endurance kick in' and I was able to get away again."

At the finish, after winning his first-ever 450cc National at Unadilla and keeping his perfect season intact, Stewart drops his KX450F and kicks the ground. "I just wanted to tell the track that I kicked its ass," Stewart says. "I got this one now."

The last race before a two-week break for Loretta Lynn's and the X Games, the Washougal AMA National may be the last 'weak link' in Stewart's quest for perfection. Last year it was the track that knocked Stewart out of the championship. However, Stewart's performance can't be any more dominant. Cody Cooper gets both holeshots but Stewart grabs the lead before the end of the first lap and leads every lap of both motos, keeping his unbeaten streak alive and well at 18 motos in a row.

Even better for Stewart, his team-mate Timmy Ferry is nursing an undisclosed injury at Washougal and can only manage an 11-6 score for eighth overall. So now, after nine rounds, Stewart leads the championship by 145 points over Ferry which means he can wrap up the title with just a 16th in moto one at Millville.

It's much the same in the Lites class. Villopoto dominates both motos at Red Bud before heading to the track where he so famously dominated the Motocross of Nations last year – Budds Creek. Of course, this year the track is going in the opposite direction from last year but that doesn't stop Villopoto. "I definitely like the flow of the track better going the other way," Villopoto admits but he's still plainly dominant and works his way into the lead and takes the win in both motos going away.

Unadilla is more of the same as Villopoto wins both motos with apparent ease, having only to fight his way past Ryan Dungey both times out. Villopoto is sitting on 15-straight moto victories and if he finishes out the season winning the final eight he'll tie James Stewart's 125cc record from 2004.

"I mean, I can lose it at any time so it's not to take for granted," Villopoto says. "It can go away real quick. I kind of had a streak in supercross which was the seven races I'd won but it wasn't as long as this one. I just want to leave Washougal and try to wrap it up at Millville. It's really just about the big picture. The moto wins are beside the point. I definitely would like to get the overalls but it's not something that I set goals for. My goal is to leave the weekend on the box and hopefully end up with the overall and that's really it."

However, it seems no-one tells Dungey about Villopoto's record-tying potential. At Washougal – Villopoto's home track – RV dominates moto one after working his way past Dungey and Josh Grant but in moto two he has to work his way again past Dungey and early leader Trey Canard. First Dungey, then Villopoto pass Canard and then the chase is on.

Dungey dramatically holds Villopoto back for the last half of the race before a rock kicks up from Dungey's rear wheel and hits Villopoto in the goggles just as the two race toward the white flag, splattering his sweat all over the inside of the goggle lens and forcing him to slow down to remove his goggles. That's all Dungey needs to take his first ever moto win and first overall with a 2-1 score, beating out Villopoto's 1-2.

With three rounds left to run Villopoto now has a 108-point lead in the championship and has won 16 of the 18 motos run so far.



James Stewart's looking good for a perfect season



Josh Grant's currently eighth in the Lites series standings



Trey Canard and Ryan Dungey lead Villopoto at Washougal

SERIES STANDINGS

MOTOCROSS

1	James Stewart	450 points
2	Timmy Ferry	305
3	Andrew Short	290
4	Michael Byrne	280
5	Mike Alessi	221
6	Cody Cooper	208
7	Davi Millsaps	203
8	Nick Wey	199
9	Jeff Alessi	177
10	Josh Hill	170

LITES

1	Ryan Villopoto	438 points
2	Ryan Dungey	329
3	Brett Metcalfe	267
4	Jake Weimer	229
5	Nico Izzi	211
6	Ryan Sipes	187
7	Trey Canard	173
8	Josh Grant	153
9	Austin Stroupe	152
10	Kyle Cunningham	148

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STEWIE TO YAMAHA? CHAD TO SUZUKI? RV UP TO A 450? IT'S ALL GOING DOWN STATESIDE AND OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER IS THE MAN IN THE KNOW...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

I could go on and on all about the AMA Nationals and what's been going on with them but let me just sum them up for you and save everyone time and money – the good times have been rolling.

That's the old Kawasaki ad slogan and it's applicable here as Ryan Villopoto and James Stewart have won all but two races. They've been so dominant that the fans and media have to look back in the pack for the action. Tim Ferry, Andrew Short and Michael Byrne have all battled for the title of next best in the 450s. In the Lites class you'd have to say Ryan Dungey has been the second best rider but a lot of times the Lites class gives you good racing from positions two through 40th.

Ben Townley, Grant Langston, Davi Millsaps, Ivan Tedesco, Broc Hepler, David Vuillemin and Mike Alessi – these are the riders missing out of the 450 class due to injury. That's a lot of race wins folks! With these big guys getting hurt it's been the summer of the privateer in the 450 class. Unlike the GPs, the AMA Nationals let anyone try to qualify that has a pro licence. These privateers have been on fire – guys like Cody Cooper, Jimmy Albertson, Jeff Alessi and Antonio Balbi have had consistent top 10s this summer. They've been so good that Red Bull Honda have held a 'try-out' with Alessi and Albertson before Washougal and by the time you read this one or both of them will be on the factory team! That's great to see and I'm glad someone followed Yamaha's lead when they picked up Sean Hamblin earlier this summer.

What's going on for '09? Well, usually at this point we know what's going on in the season of silliness. We can blame it all on Team L&M because they've signed James Stewart next year and are working on what brand of bikes. When I spoke with Larry Brooks two months ago he made it seem like they were very close with Yamaha and that would be a natural fit with L&M knowing Yamahas so well and with Chad Reed leaving the tuning fork team. But something must be up with that deal otherwise you'd think it would've been announced by now. Maybe Suzuki or Honda have thrown their hat into the ring? I still think it will be Yamaha and expect an announcement of a supercross-only deal for Stewie.

Once L&M decides on bike manufacturer the other dominos will fall I think. Kawasaki have signed Ryan Villopoto to team up with Ferry but they are holding off announcing it until James leaves. If they announced it now it might look to some that Kawi don't want Stewart and then they might suffer some bad PR. If Stewie announces he's signed with L&M then it looks more like that he left and Kawi had to sign RV. Don't believe it though – Kawasaki let James go despite him being the baddest ass rider on the planet. Maybe it was the money, maybe it was other things – I'm not sure but Kawasaki let RC go and he is the GOAT. They're obviously not scared to let the next GOAT go.

Chad Reed doesn't have a whole lot of options left. He left L&M (and don't let him tell you otherwise) and he also turned a deal down at Factory Yamaha because of the whole 'having to wear blue gear' thing. Say what you want about The Chad, he sticks to his principles! With Honda already going on record as wanting to re-sign everybody and have the same team in '09 and with Kawi all set you're left with Suzuki and KTM. He's talked about both with me but I think he'll be at Suzuki in '09 but will have to take a hit in salary because Suzuki already told him no deal to his original asking price. KTM/MDK might be there as they did make a big offer to KW for '08 so they're obviously not scared to throw cash about but with the bike being unproven in SX I'd be surprised to see him there.

Davi Millsaps is being courted by JGR as is Josh Grant and Nick Wey. I think you'll see a combo of those three plus current team rider Josh Summey as the two the team settles on. I can't see Millsaps leaving Factory Honda for JGR and having to move to North Carolina (which is what the team requires). He's won on his current bike and, let's face it, not too many people leave Factory Honda willingly! Another player for the JGR slot could be Michael Byrne – he's been riding very well this year and he lets the JGR Yamaha guys ride at his track every now and then. I know the JGR guys are serious and want to take the next step up in 2009.

Another rider that's up for grabs is Andrew Short. The consistent Red Rider

might not be someone who amazes you with his all-out skill but he's very fast and puts himself in places to win a race. I don't know why Honda haven't signed him yet – he's fast, friendly, has fans and stays injury free. All things I would look for in a rider if I was a team manager. I've spoken with Andrew

Michael Byrne's been on the podium three times so far this season



about his 2009 plans and he doesn't know what he's doing also. He told me that team-mates Ivan Tedesco and Davi Millsaps have ridden the '09 CRFs but for some reason Honda didn't ask him. That's not a good sign for sure. If I HAD to bet I'd say he still re-signs with Honda but the longer it goes on, the less likely it will happen. Rumour has him talking to MDK/KTM and when I asked him he laughed but didn't deny it.

Suzuki will be in a cost-cutting mode from what I hear – if they get Reed it will be Rockstar energy drink that pays most of the salary. I heard that Byrne is deep in discussions with Suzuki to re-sign and that makes a lot of sense. Byrne is a better SX rider and Suzuki should give him a chance to show it.

Some of this stuff will be sorted by the time you read this while some won't happen at all and I'll look like an idiot. Please remember this though – if any of it comes true you read it in DBR first!



On track he can be a bit hit and miss but among the fans Marc's one of the most popular riders in the paddock

CHICKEN CHASIN'!

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

HODGE HOOKS UP WITH CALIMERO – MARC DE REUVER – TO GET THE LOWDOWN ON THE HIT OR MISS HONDA STAR...

Just under one year ago 25-year-old Dutchman Marc de Reuver was on the verge of quitting motocross for good but this year he's bounced back to lead Honda's onslaught on the MX1 world title. Although yet to win a GP moto in 2008 Marc has taken one overall win – in his Italian Honda Martin team's home country GP at Mantova – and a second plus three third placed finishes in individual motos.

DBR: Marc, you've had a new lease of life this year – what happened?

MDR: "What can I say? Last year I couldn't make any results because of my back. That's not a minor injury. I did it in February. I went testing suspension at Asti and I cracked my back a little bit on a bump. At first I thought it was just normal – a little bit sore the next morning – but it was still sore a week later and the pain was getting worse. I was getting pain in my legs too. I made a scan and they diagnosed a hernia but I didn't want to operate.

"I hadn't even raced my first GP for my new team and I wanted to keep it quiet. Yamaha

wanted that too and then in June they told me I was out. They knew as soon as I did what was wrong, they wanted to make the scan also – there were no secrets between me and Yamaha.

"I knew, my mam and dad knew and Yamaha knew but nobody else. They told me I had to come to Yamaha HQ near Schiphol – this was after France – and they said I could go. If I wanted to continue to race for Yamaha I could race for Van Beers or somebody like that."

DBR: How did you feel?

MDR: "Quite bummed. Not really happy. The next GP in Sweden was when I crashed and knocked myself out real bad again. Those crashes were coming because I wasn't fit and you don't ride a 450 when you're not fit – it plays with you!"

DBR: Yet in May of 2007 you came within a couple of laps of winning the German GP...

MDR: "I really don't know how I managed the results I did, like in Teutschenthal when I was leading the GP midway through the second moto until I fell. I couldn't train much – certainly not

enough to ride a 450 – and my confidence on the bike was at zero.

"But I still didn't want to tell anybody else what was wrong. I was respecting my contract, even if they didn't. I had a two-year contract with an option for a third year but it was already over after six months. But, until my contract was officially over, I said nothing. Like when you asked me each week I just shrugged it off with 'I'm just riding bad, man'.

"This is business, there's no playing around anymore and perhaps they wouldn't have paid me if I had opened my mouth and told the truth. Next year I'm 26, I like to play but I'm not the clown anymore."

DBR: What was the worst thing, the absolute lowest point?

MDR: "In Namur I didn't even qualify and in England I didn't ride the second heat because I was scared. I was landing all the time on the rear wheel to be safe – I was really that scared. Just now, in the middle of '08, it is finally coming together again and I'm landing on the front wheel."



Marc's gameplan is simple.
"I want to win - and I want
to beat Yamaha!"



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DBR: So what turned it around in Lierop?

MDR: "One week before Lierop I received a really ****ty email from Michele Rinaldi – it was a like a blue letter saying that they were not happy. That wound me up – did he think I was happy? He wasn't even there in Lierop but I wanted to show them all. I wasn't fit but for me there is a difference between riding 40 minutes in Lierop and somewhere like France – Lierop is much more easy for me.

"It was everything, the crowd, the day, I don't think I could do it a second time when I was so unfit. I didn't even go to Cairoli's party that evening, I just had to go home and lie down on the sofa, I was completely done. I was so stiff the next day I had to roll out of bed, then I made the plans for the operation. But if I hadn't ridden like I did in Lierop, then for sure I would not be here. I would have quit."

DBR: So when did you start talking to Paolo Martin?

MDR: "I had been talking to Paolo since Loket in July. He was interested in me even when I was doing **** but it's not like we were strangers.

Paolo already wanted me a couple of years ago but there were stories flying around about Pichon and not paying. I now know the real story but at the time you only hear rumours and if you have other options you stay clear of situations where you are not sure."

DBR: Back in August Paolo made jokes with me about perhaps offering you a contract race-by-race. Did he really propose that to you at any time?

MDR: "No but that's Paolo. He's cool, man. He didn't put any pressure on me – he can joke but he's serious. Like letting me prepare for this year. By my standards I was actually quite fat at the end of last year and the hernia op is quite a heavy one. But he just let me do my own thing. I had the operation on 12 October, one week after the final of the Dutch championship.

"I was meant to start riding again in the first week of December but the weather was so bad in Holland and I didn't want to start on frozen tracks so I went with my dad for one week to Barcelona. I had one week very good riding, celebrated New Year and then flew to America.

I did some good training all through January in America. I lost a lot of training last year and I had to catch it back up. Even now I'm still catching up, that's why I get better every week."

DBR: What bike were you riding back in January?

MDR: "I rode a stock bike with the team's suspension and triple clamps. It wasn't until the Starcross at Mantova in February that I used the Martin Honda from last year but I was really happy on it from the start. You know, I never rode Honda before in my whole life but I had tested their bike on a small track in Italy and I was really comfortable. And the team is really nice – technically, personally, everything."

DBR: The factory bikes didn't arrive until March but I guess they were worth waiting for. How different are they to stock?

MDR: "The factory bike actually has less horsepower but more torque and is very smooth but it is the suspension which makes all the difference – it's not A-kit, it's full factory. I don't know to explain it. The Martin bike is already good and you can win GPs with that but the factory has the system for starting where you press a button and the blue light comes on – it changes the ignition I think.

"Like I said before a 450 can hurt you when you crash and Honda clearly realise this. I didn't test anything before the bike came but you can really ride this bike – it doesn't play with you and that's nice."

>>

Spain was not a happy hunting ground for De Reuver this year

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THE MANAGER'S VIEW...

CATCHING FIVE WITH LORENZO RESTA

Honda Martin's sports director Lorenzo Resta is probably one of the coolest team management guys in the history of motocross. A former chef with a history of providing the finest hospitality in WSB and Moto GP, Lorenzo moved to the MX GP scene in 2004 and has progressed to the point where he's now the hands on chief of the Italian-based factory Honda team.

Lorenzo works closely with both of his MX1 riders – Marc De Reuver and Julien Bill – to ensure he gets the best from them both on and off the track. We caught up with Lorenzo to find out what he thinks about Dutchman De Reuver...

DBR: Lorenzo, this is the first year you've worked with Marc – what are your impressions of him so far?

LR: "Marc is really a special guy, he needs to be in a really professional team but also one where he feels comfortable. Of course he was in what is probably the most professional team in motocross last year but he also needs the human touch – it is difficult to explain."

DBR: Marc had quite a bad year with Yamaha in 2007 so it was quite a surprise to a lot of people when you signed him for '08.

LR: "We contacted Marc already two years ago but it wasn't possible to sign him at that time. But we have always believed he is a really talented rider and his character – his way with the media, with the fans – is fantastic."

"He is a man who can make the difference with

promotion but from a sporting point of view he is also at the top."

DBR: Marc is currently 10th in the world championship – are you happy with his results this year?

LR: "Of course his championship position is not what we expected but we have had really bad luck. And his individual results – the GP victory in Mantova and four moto podiums – have proved that he is fast. And to win the Italian GP for the first time was incredible for us."

DBR: Do you expect to see more from Marc in '09?

LR: "I think we are going to see something really special next year. After his operation last year we did not have a lot of time to prepare but this year we will have the whole winter to prepare. And the bike for next year is fantastic, I think it will surprise a lot of people – it is something completely different and I think we will be able to compare it to the introduction of the aluminium-framed bike."

CALI-WHAT?

MARC'S MONIKER

To most of us Brits Marc's nickname means nowt so we asked the dashing Dutchman how he got it and – more to the point – what the hell Calimero is...

"Calimero's a cartoon character – a little bird with skinny legs and a white eggshell on his head. When I was a kid I used to wear a white helmet and had these long thin legs so that's where it comes from."

While we were chatting Marc also took the opportunity to put the record straight about how his name should be pronounced. "It's De Roy-ver man! Not De Roo-ver!"

So all that 'The Hoover' nonsense is exactly that – nonsense!



The Dutchman is right at home on the Honda after a torrid time with Yamaha



DBR: But before you got to ride the factory bike you hurt yourself again?

MDR: "Yeah, at Gemert. I twisted my ankle and damaged the cartilage. My ankle is still not so good and I still have to tape it up. Gemert was where I broke my knee in 2005 too – I don't think I'll ride there again."

DBR: You were incredibly fast at the opening GP in Valkenswaard though...

MDR: "Ken De Dycker just pipped me for pole on the last lap but I was fastest in warm-up by two-and-a-half seconds. Then in the race I was just so tense. There was so much expectation, perhaps it would have been better if I hadn't been so fast in qualification. And my starts were poor also that day. I was putting pressure on myself – I really thought it was going to happen."

DBR: And Spain didn't get any better...

MDR: "Nobody wanted the inside gate because it was full of mud. They did nothing on the whole track and it was so dangerous. I didn't start in the rut because I was on the inside and not interfering with another rider so I moved to the inside. I was in line with the edge of the gate and I couldn't go around the gate like they said because there were haybales there – I went straight out of the gate."

"Then after a couple of laps I saw on my

pitboard 'black flag – come out'. I looked across on the start straight and there was no black flag so I continued but then I got the signal again so I pulled in and said 'what's the problem?'

"I had to go to the jury and Srb looked at me like I committed murder. He said 'Marc, what are you doing?' and I said 'you tell me what I am doing'. He said I started next to the gate and they had pictures. I said 'show me then', then it was 'oh but the marshal saw it and this and that'. What can you say? That was not a real GP anyway but since then each week has been getting better."

DBR: Moving on... You seem like you're really enjoying riding the Honda.

MDR: "Yeah, I am really in control this year. I don't get out of shape on the Honda and that is the bike and me. Of course I crash – everybody crashes – but nothing seriously dangerous. Like at Mantova everybody was telling me I was making lots of mistakes but the rest obviously made even more mistakes otherwise I would not have won. That track was tough! When I won Mantova I was already thinking of the red plate but England kinda wrecked that."

DBR: You were pretty mad at Philippaerts after that race.

MDR: "Yeah, the first moto I would have been

third and Philippaerts fourth out of the first turn if he had just stayed on his line. He wanted to come inside and he jumped on top of me."

"Then I took the holeshot in the second moto and I was gone. I didn't make a mistake, I just jumped next to the track – I nearly did it again the next lap. The track was so slick there and the line took us to the edge of the track. It was really difficult, I just jumped off the track..."

DBR: You were pretty sour with the Dutch federation when they didn't go to the des Nations. How is it now with the KNMV?

MDR: "I had a good conversation with the boss and he promised that it will be better this year so I'll wait for that. We put the past behind us and will start again – the Nations is still a little bit in my mind but I think I'll go. I have to go for the sponsors – that is the biggest race of the whole year and they expect me to be there."

DBR: There are many sides to Marc de Reuver?

MDR: "Yeah, I enjoy clown riding when I'm not racing – Aubin rides like that in the race only for him that's real. I like to play around and do crazy stuff but when the racing starts I get serious."

DBR: What are your short and long-term aims?

MDR: "I want to win – and I want to beat Yamaha!"

bike test

*On fast, flowing trails
Aprilia's RXV450 is a
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RAMA!

DBR'S TIME-TRAVELLING SLURM-FUELLED TEST TEAM OF DR ZOIDBERG AND BENDER ("PLEASE INSERT GIRDER") PLANET EXPRESS THEMSELVES TO NORTH WALES TO TEST APRILIA'S FUTURISTIC RXV450...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Andrew Ferguson**



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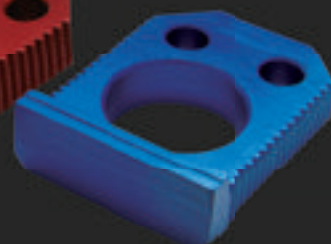


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The Aprilia V-twin has been around for a few years now and our invitation to North Wales to test the RXV450 was welcomed at DBR Towers. I have to admit to considering the bike a little different in its concept with two cylinders and a rather strange looking chassis including a swingarm which wouldn't look out of place in WSB racing.

A version of this bike is kicking some serious arse in world supermoto and in the hands of Stefan Merriman the factory enduro bike is fighting its way through a very tough season in the WEC series which is testament to its durability.

The bike looks weird. I have to say it. In fact there is absolutely no getting away from it. The rad scoops with their sharp angles working back along the bike to the angular rear panels give the bike a futuristic look. Couple that with the mahoosive swingarm and boxy frame and the bike starts to look like a heavy vehicle to go off for a hard days dirt scooting in the woods. The Aprilia, as you would expect, is fitted and finished well with quality components all round. In today's competitive manufacturing market there is simply no room for sub-standard componentry on any bikes.

...but becomes a bit more of a handful in tight, technical terrain



I was looking forward to the ride and with a motocross track to get the initial feel for the bike before hitting the Welsh hills it was shaping up to be a cool day's riding.

When I first jumped onto the Aprilia I found it sat quite tall but it felt pretty comfortable and neutral. The handlebar position feels low but this is good for seated turning. I moved the bars so they were in line with the fork angle and this was comfortable for the day. If the bars are too far forward on this bike it is difficult to steer as the Aprilia reacts well to the front forks being weighted in the turns. On the couple of laps I took with the bars in a forward rotated position I found the bike to be impossible to turn in the tighter corners on parts of the MX track.

The brakes and controls all felt positive and smooth on the bike. The gearbox was positive in its shifting as long as the load was eased before hitting the shift. This bike produces great torque so it will not allow power shifting without a little help from a friendly clutch. Talking of power, the V-twin motor was a surprise to me. I don't really know what I was expecting but the motor delivered great roll-on power.

With this bike on open going you can crack the throttle on and it will not do anything too aggressive or untoward. The delivery from the twin is super-smooth as long as you are in a situation where you are carrying a little bit of speed. The power keeps building and you can feel the speed increase with no dramas or major wheelspin.

Having said that, there is an issue with the delivery in really tight going. The motor will bite quite hard at its very lowest revs on the initial opening of the throttle and it has a bit of a mind of its own. I found the bike to be a little hard to control in the tight going as it would pick up quickly and aggressively for a split second. This characteristic could easily be smoothed out via the fuel injection system but I have to report as I find and this was a problem on the stock bikes on the day which made for quite a lot of stalling.

Absolutely everything about the motor and its delivery is great apart from the initial snap from zero throttle to its first incremental movement.

The way the bike rides with regard to its chassis and power delivery combination is certainly different from any other bike. Time

>>

bike test

The V-twin eats up this kind of open going...





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Its radical, futuristic styling ensures the Aprilia stands out from the crowd

TWIN SHOCKS!

APRILIA PROVIDES A JEKYLL AND HYDE RIDE

Words by Sean Lawless

Having dragged my lardy arse out of the office for a recent day blasting Beemers around the Brecon Beacons I was well up for another day in the saddle.

I've ridden the '07 450 so I was pretty sure I knew what I was letting myself in for but the hardpack, stony MX track we warmed up on with loads of evil elevation changes was a world away from the flat, loamy circuit on which I'd taken last year's V-twin for a spin.

The latest RXV feels great coming out of turns where you can carry a bit of corner speed – simply roll on the throttle and it propels you forward in a super-smooth manner with bags of tractable power. But exiting slow corners if you get a little bit whisky with the throttle the back wheel spins up and you find yourself going sideways instead of forwards.

The lack of engine-braking also gave me a couple of real arse-clenching moments. On a flat, loamy track this isn't a problem but when you're trying to scrub speed from a steep downhill the feeling of running on you get with the RXV is right up there with Deep Heat on your hairy boys in the comfort stakes.

Off the track and into the woods and the mixed messages the bike provides make for a Jekyll and Hyde ride. On super-slow stuff I was either stalling the motor or struggling to stop the real wheel spinning but as soon as I got the revs up on more flowing stuff the RXV was a completely different beast – predictable, comfortable and loads of fun to ride. And get it out on fast trails and even my lid's too-tight cheek padding couldn't stop the merde-munching grin stretching from ear-to-ear!

In fairness to the RXV there are many, many more accomplished riders out there than me. For a man of Walker's talents our test was fine to get a feel for the bike but a couple of hours is nowhere near long enough for a man of my skills to get used to what is a fairly radically different feeling machine to the more conventional four-poppers on the market today.

And the good news is that plans are being finalised for a dedicated Aprilia Experience project that should be up and running by the autumn so potential customers can try before they buy. Watch this space...



Going...



...going...



...eat gravel sucker!



on this bike would be the rider's best friend as it takes a bit of getting used too. The wide rad scoops don't really seem to fit with the type of racing this model is aimed at. There are parts of the bike which look like they could be made slimmer but the fashion designers have not compromised with their design to make smoother bodywork around the bike. When you look down at the tank area it gives you the impression you are carrying a 30-litre fuel tank. A slimmer and more simple design could work better for the enduro world but I am not a designer so I will leave it there.

The chassis works well on fast flowing tracks and trails – it is not amazing at anything in particular but it feels really planted at speed. The chassis does seem to enjoy speed and this bike as a unit is made to carry speed and make the rider confident to cover non-technical ground at a good clip. The best way I can

describe the chassis is 'solid'. It is solid in its build and performance.

This solid feeling doesn't really help the bike in more technical situations and this translates to a heavy feel to the bike. In certain situations I got myself into on the day I found the bike to be a bit of a lump to manoeuvre around when things got tough.

With some set up and time I am sure this bike can really deliver in the woods as Merriman demonstrates week after week and it is a superbly engineered and radical package which has been put together with full Italian style and passion.

I can understand why this bike rips at the supermoto venues of the world and hopefully one day I can whip on the leather gear and turn a few laps on the smooth stuff. But for me personally it is not 100 per cent there in the woods just yet...

Nico Aubin takes a tight line and Tommy keeps it WFO out wide at the start of the first MX2 moto in SA



LONG WAY DOWN!

FROM SWEDEN TO SOUTH AFRICA THE MX GP CIRCUS KEEPS ON TRUCKING...

Words and photos by Sully



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Despite winning in SA
Tommy Searle's still
21 points off leader
Rattray's pace

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	David Philippaerts	(Monster Yamaha)	339 points
2	Steve Ramon	(Teka Suzuki)	328
3	Josh Coppins	(Monster Yamaha)	316
4	Ken De Dycker	(Teka Suzuki)	296
5	Jon Barragan	(Silver Action KTM)	284
6	Sebastien Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	274
7	Max Nagl	(Red Bull KTM)	253
8	Billy MacKenzie	(CAS Honda)	235
9	Tanel Leok	(Kawasaki Racing Team)	234
10	Marc De Reuver	(Honda Martin)	156
18	James Noble	(KTM UK)	93
19	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	66
25	Brad Anderson	(Swift Suzuki)	30
39	Wayne Smith	(Pioneer Yamaha)	5
42	Jordan Rose	(STR Honda)	3

MX2 >>

1	Tyla Rattray	(Red Bull KTM)	416 points
2	Tommy Searle	(Red Bull KTM)	395
3	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	357
4	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	287
5	Nico Aubin	(Ricci Yamaha)	243
6	Rui Goncalves	(Red Bull KTM)	241
7	Xavier Boog	(Inotec Suzuki)	211
8	Jeremy Van Horebeek	(Champ KTM)	197
9	Steven Frossard	(CLS Kawasaki)	196
10	Manuel Monni	(3C Yamaha)	187
12	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	170
18	Gautier Paulin	(Molson Kawasaki)	95
19	Carl Nunn	(Suso Suzuki)	73
23	Jason Dougan	(Suso Suzuki)	38
25	Pascal Leuret	(Swift Suzuki)	36
31	Elliot Banks-Browne	(Swift Suzuki)	18
32	Jake Nicholls	(Swift Suzuki)	17
47	Neville Bradshaw	(DB Racing Honda)	2
48	Marcus Norlen	(Suso Suzuki)	2

When Tommy Searle's mechanic Gareth Edmunds holds out a pitboard in Sweden that has 'CLEAN HIM OUT' hastily scribbled down in chalk for Tommy (possibly) to wipe out (allegedly) Antonio Cairoli (probably) who'd predict that just two weeks later in South Africa, Davide Guarneri will take the message to heart and end the reigning MX2 champ's season?

Of course, the coming together between Antonio and old-sparring partner Guarneri is unintentional – even though the pair have a long-standing history of clashing on the track which must be down to some sort of animal magnetism or something – but the end result is just as devastating... One torn ACL and a bunch of cartilage damage for TC and an early end to his career as an MX2 contender.

With Cairoli out of the chase the battle for world championship honours boils down to an all-orange affair between two riders who most likely won't be hanging around to defend their title if they win either – Searle who's headed to America and Tyla Rattray who's most likely gonna officially announce a move to the MX1 class at Lommel.

Although Styla doesn't win either the Swedish or South African GP overalls he does win a moto at each round and edges away from Tommy in the championship standings. Tyla's 1-3 at Uddevalla is mirrored with a 3-1 at Nelspruit which gives him a 90-point total for the two GPs. In comparison, Tommy's score of 80 comes from a 6-4 in Sweden and the of 1-2 in South Africa where he of course tops the podium.

Rider of the Month award though – if there was such a thing – has to go to swift-starting Scotsman Shaun Simpson. Scorching out of the Uddevalla gate to take both holeshots, Shaun rides smart races in the difficult conditions to secure a career best 3-2 finish that ensure he stands on the podium for the second time this year. A pair of hard fought for fourths in South Africa strengthen Simpson's fourth place – soon to be third thanks to Tony C's demise – ranking in the series.

Swift Suzuki's Jake Nicholls qualifies for his first GP of the year in Sweden after missing more than a few rounds through injury. Scoring points in three out of four motos, the Reverend – who finishes an outstanding 12th overall in South Africa – now sits 32nd in the MX2

series standings just one point behind his Swift team-mate Elliot Banks-Browne. Elliot doesn't score in Sweden and only picks up one point in South Africa as he gets stuck in first lap pile-ups.

Stephen Sword returns to action in South Africa and while his pace and fitness are in fine fettle his levels of luck are not. Swordy crashes 50 metres out of the gate in race one and only gets halfway around the lap in race two before sampling the tasty Nelspruit soil. Two lonely rides from the back of the pack see the Scotsman add to his points tally for the first time since France.

After Carl Nunn and Jason Dougan score eight points apiece in Sweden the Suso Suzuki boys are non-attendees in South Africa as none of the three – don't forget Marcus Norlen – sit inside the top 15 in points and therefore don't receive Youthstream's travel allowance.

In MX1 reigning world champion Steve Ramon continues to close the gap between himself and current series leader David Philippaerts. With the gap now down to 11 and a heavy sand race at Lommel on the horizon don't be surprised if the red plate changes hands for the first time since Portugal! Ramon outscores DP in every race bar one and even wins the first moto in Nelspruit but the big points scorer in the big bore class this month is actually Jonathan Barragan.

The Spanish Silver Action KTM star becomes the first MX1 rider of the year to take back-to-back overall wins by dominating in both Uddevalla (1-2) and then Nelspruit (3-1) to jump from seventh to fifth in the championship chase. Max Nagl wins a moto in Sweden and also looks to have the legs in South Africa until Barragan closes him down at two-thirds race distance to sprint away to the chequered flag for his third moto win of the year – only Sebastien Pourcel has more.

Pourcel's as inconsistent as

ever – only taking 43 points from a possible 100 – and Josh Coppins slips back into mediocrity too but still sits third in the championship. Ken De Dycker consolidates his fourth place in the series standings while his replacement at CAS Honda Billy MacKenzie sits eighth but climbs closer to running race-winning pace after his shoulder injury.

CAS newcomer Steve Boniface makes up for a poor showing in Germany by leading for more laps than anyone in moto one in Sweden before slipping back to sixth. Finishing 11th in moto two, the enigmatic Frenchman's ill in South Africa but scores consistently to enter the top-20 of the standings after sitting out the first six rounds of the championship. Just ahead of Boniface in the series standings are Tom Church (19th) and James Noble (18th) who keep on logging the points. Much less consistent in his first full year of GP competition is Swift Suzuki's Brad Anderson who scores three points in Sweden but is a no-show in Nelspruit.

The championship now enters its final third and with two sand races (Lommel and Lierop), two hardpack races (Loket and Faenza) and one unknown (Dublin) it's tough to predict just which way the championships will go – so stay tuned!



'CLEAN HIM OUT' – surely
Giz is referring to the riders'
post-race poker game...

RETURN TO FOXHILL!

AFTER AN EIGHT-YEAR LAY OFF TOP-FLIGHT MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP ACTION RETURNS TO ONE OF BRITAIN'S ALL-TIME FAVOURITE MOTOCROSS VENUES – FOXHILL MOTO PARC NEAR SWINDON

Words and photo by **Sutty**

Aside from regular visits from the British Masters series it's been a long while since the twin valleys of the Foxhill motocross circuit have echoed to the sound of a full gate's worth of charging racers ripping down the valley at full speed. And while the atmosphere in the natural amphitheatre-like setting may be much less electric than those halcyon days of yore, the on-track action reminds the 2,500 fans or so who support this race just why it remains a firm favourite in the minds of many '90s motocross fans.

For the '08 epic a vast sum of money has been pumped into the Foxhill facility with added topsoil, extra fencing and even an underground watering system installed into the site that hosted those classic double-header GPs that were a first for Europe. And after the mud races of '98, '99 and '00, then eight years of neglect, boy does this circuit need a good spit shine and polish.

After swallowing Sword's MX2 series lead at Desertmartin, KTM UK's Shaun Simpson rolls into Foxhill with a nifty nine-point lead in the MX2 series and the motivation to make it even bigger. But nobody figures Swordy would return from injury in such good shape...

After a scintillating pair of 30-minute plus two lap motos of wheel-to-wheel racing that see Swordy do the double – undoubtedly helped by a Simpson slip up on the last lap of race two – the elder Scotsman slashes into Shaun's series lead. Now only three points back and with just two rounds remaining there's all to play for at Brampton and Hawkstone Park.

Third overall on the day is American newcomer Zach Osbourne who finds himself drafted into the UTAG Yamaha squad mid-season. Running his disgraced former Yamaha of Troy team-mate Jason Lawrence's #338, Zach pushes hard on the hardpack circuit to try and keep Sword and Simpson in sight but falls back as the motos progress and his lack of fitness becomes more apparent.

Swift Suzuki jam three of their bikes into the top seven on the day as series returnee Pascal Leuret finishes fourth twice for fourth overall with race one holeshotter Jake Nicholls fifth overall and Elliott Banks-Browne seventh behind Martin Barr who has another uninspired weekend at the races but still sits third in the series standings behind Simpson and Sword.

In the MX1 division Billy Mac bounces back from a round five no-show to keep his holeshot, lead every lap, set the fastest lap on the way to winning every moto he starts thing alive. It's apparent that the straw-haired Scotsman has stepped it up a level or three this season as not one of his MX1 Maxxis classmates can get remotely close to either Billiam or the factory Honda but at least they keep trying.

KTM UK's James Noble tries so hard he loops out on the start line in moto one and loses an age trying to restart his bike that has soil blocking the silencer – "just like Donny Schmit in '93," reckons James. Finally restarting a good 30 seconds down on the pack when he's found and cleared the blockage, James makes good progress through the field to finally come home seventh in race one. After finishing a solid third in race two James consolidates his second place in the series standings but Brad Anderson's closing in fast.

Ando runs 4-2 on the day on the Swift Suzuki to finish second overall and now sits just five points behind James in the series standings – can we expect more bar-banging battles from these two like we saw at Pontrilas last year? Let's hope so!

Behind Brad, Mark Jones now sits solidly in fourth spot in the championship chase on his ARB Kawasaki as both Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church and Pioneer Yamaha's man-on-form Wayne Smith suffer a point-sapping DNF at Foxhill.

From the hardpack valleys of Foxhill the series now moves to the high-speed sandy fells of Brampton in Cumbria – we'll see you there, eh?





SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	Billy MacKenzie	(Monster CAS Honda)	250 points
2	James Noble	(KTM UK)	211
3	Brad Anderson	(Swift Suzuki)	206
4	Mark Jones	(ARB Kawasaki)	193
5	Wayne Smith	(Pioneer Emberson Yamaha)	179
6	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	175
7	Mark Eastwood	(Wiseco Honda)	132
8	Bryan MacKenzie	(Twisted-7 Kawasaki)	119
9	Mark Hucklebridge	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	110
10	Jim Murro	(STR Honda)	94

MX2 >>

1	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	251 points
2	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	248
3	Martin Barr	(UTAG Yamaha.com)	208
4	Jason Dougan	(Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	148
5	Carl Nunn	(Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	142
6	Neville Bradshaw	(DB Honda)	139
7	Elliott Banks-Browne	(Swift Suzuki)	137
8	Marcus Norlen	(Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	112
9	Lewis Gregory	(Relentless Suzuki)	105
10	Pascal Leuret	(Swift Suzuki)	103

His win in Czecho keeps Adam Raga in the hunt (and Shirty happy)



ALIVE AND KICKING!

BOU STILL LEADS BUT VICTORY IN CZECHO KEEPS RAGA IN THE HUNT

Photo by Eric Kitchen

Spanish Gas Gas star Adam Raga keeps his world championship hopes alive and kicking by winning the latest round of the 2008 WTC series at Kramolin in the Czech Republic ahead of the Montesa factory duo of Toni Bou and Takahisa Fujinami.

Bou starts the trial looking as strong as ever until he reaches section five of lap one where he drops a silly dab allowing Raga – who is still on zero marks lost – to edge ahead. However, the reigning champ bounces back into the lead by out-riding his countryman in sections seven and eight where the Gas Gas rider fives twice allowing Bou – who only drops three in each section – to move clear. Both riders stay pretty much even for the rest of the lap meaning the Montesa rider holds a three-mark advantage going into lap two.

Raga's made a habit of launching massive comebacks on the second lap of world trials so far this year and Kramolin is no different. An impressive lap score of seven – compared to Bou's 18 – gives the cocky Catalan his third win of the year and means he climbs back to within 12 points of the series leader.

Albert Cabestany's trial falls apart on lap two after pushing the leading pair on lap one and he ends the trial in fourth place after Fujigas rides a blinder to take the final podium position.

Dougie Lampkin has a nightmare weekend only finishing seventh after injuring his shoulder in Saturday's practice session without even falling from his bike. Now slipping to sixth in the series – his lowest ranking for some time – the tenacious Yorkshireman has just three rounds to climb back inside the top five. Fellow Brits James Dabill and Michael Brown finish the day ninth and eighth to consolidate their eighth and ninth places in the championship standings.

In the Junior championship Gas Gas' Guillaume Laniel records his first win of the season with a single-mark victory over championship leader Loris Gubian. Gubian now leads the championship by 11 points ahead of British Montesa rider Alexz Wigg who is suffering from a knee injury and can only finish in sixth place in the Czech Republic.

Jack Challoner continues to lead the Youth championship by 30 points despite a recent run of bad form. Fifth-placed rider in the series Adrian Pastoriza rides the wheels off his Gas Gas to finish second behind Alexandre Ferrer who despite sitting third in the standings takes his first win of the year on his Sherco machine.

The championship now takes its traditional summer break with the next world round being held in Uddevalla in Sweden on August 31.

SERIES STANDINGS

WORLD >>

1	Toni Bou	(ESP – Montesa)	168 points
2	Adam Raga	(ESP – Gas Gas)	156
3	Takahisa Fujinami	(JPN – Montesa)	142
4	Albert Cabestany	(ESP – Sherco)	102
5	Jeroni Fajardo	(ESP – Beta)	99
6	Dougie Lampkin	(GB – Beta)	97
7	Marc Freixa	(ESP – Gas Gas)	77
8	James Dabill	(GB – Montesa)	74
9	Michael Brown	(GB – Beta)	60
10	Daniel Oliveras	(ESP – Sherco)	46
18	Shaun Morris	(GB – Gas Gas)	6

JUNIOR >>

1	Loris Gubian	(FRA – Sherco)	154
2	Alexz Wigg	(GB – Montesa)	143
3	Alfredo Gomez	(ESP – Montesa)	117
4	Sam Haslam	(GB – Gas Gas)	116
5	Matteo Grattarola	(ITA – Sherco)	115
6	Ross Danby	(GB – Gas Gas)	104
16	Lee Sampson	(GB – Sherco)	14
24	George Morton	(GB – Beta)	6
29	James Fry	(GB – Sherco)	2
30	Ben Wibberley	(GB – Gas Gas)	1

YOUTH >>

1	Jack Challoner	(GB – Beta)	156
2	Fransesc Moret	(SPA – Sherco)	126
3	Alexandre Ferrer	(FRA – Sherco)	123
4	Patrick Smage	(USA – Sherco)	99
5	Adrian Pastoriza	(ESP – Gas Gas)	96
6	Benoit Dagnicourt	(FRA – Beta)	94
7	Pau Botella	(ESP – Gas Gas)	81
8	Pere Borrellas	(ESP – Gas Gas)	62
9	Jonathan Richardson	(GB – Sherco)	53
10	Jake Whitaker	(NZ – HM)	52
25	Jonathan Walker	(GB – Sherco)	5
26	Adam Jones	(GB – Sherco)	4
29	Jack Thompson	(GB – Sherco)	1

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RAGE



BATTLE ROYALE!

YOUTH STARS SCRAP IT OUT AS MX2 SERIES GOES DOWN TO THE WIRE

JOSH WATERMAN

Gavin Corsi is one of the many youth racers taking advantage of the exposure the MXY2 series brings



BATTLE ROYALE!

AFTER THREE OF FOUR ROUNDS, RAGE TAKES A SWIFT LOOK AT ONE OF BRITAIN'S PREMIER YOUTH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS – THE MAXXIS MXY2 SERIES

The MXY2 series gives Britain's best youth motocross riders the opportunity to race alongside the main men at four of the eight Maxxis British championship rounds – this year at Donington, Torrington, Foxhill and Brampton.

For riders aged from 14-18 riding either 125cc two-strokes or 250cc four-strokes there's no better way of getting a taste of the big time because as well as the races being held on the best tracks in the UK, the MXY2 series gives the nippers a chance to perform in front of big crowds and industry bigwigs.

Run for the first time in 2007, the series was won by Irish lad Graeme Irwin who's now a regular MX2 championship rider and after three of four rounds in 2008 it's another rider from across the Irish Sea who's leading the series. PAR Honda's Edward Allingham finished 10th in last year's series, spent the winter training in America and came out swinging at Donington Park. Runner-up in race one at Donington, Ed had a 'mare in moto two and only finished eighth, then things got worse in race one at Torrington.

Struggling in the mud of moto one Allingham finished a season low of 13th but since then he hasn't finished off the podium. Third in the second race in Devon, Edward's gone one better in each moto since and now leads the series by 13 points.

Coming into Foxhill with the red series leader's number plate Josh Waterman's best result had been a third in moto one at Torrington but consistent rides meant the Team Green rider held a three-point lead in the series. A turn one crash in race one left Josh at the back of the pack with it all to do but he calmly pulled through to seventh but lost the series lead to Allingham. Fifth in race two, Waterman's now 13 points back behind Allingham with just one round left to run.

While Josh is 13 points behind Allingham he's also 13 ahead of the third placed rider – miniscule Marshfield mafia member Sam Davis. The pint-sized racer steered his MotoXtreme Kawasaki to second overall at the season opener with a pair of thirds, had a DNF and an 11th in the mud at Torrington and entered round three sixth in points.

Proving he's as tough as he is fast, Sam battled to third in moto one at Foxhill with no goggles on after the strap on his race pair snapped on the start line. Thrown a tear-off-free sighting-lap pair by his dad seconds before the gate dropped that lastest just a lap, Sam snatched third from Nathan Rooks just two straights from home. A second race seventh sees Sam sit third in the points having overtaken Joe Gregory, Tom Watts and Scott Elderfield at his home round of the series.

Elderfield's actually won more races in this

championship than anyone else but a pair of DNFs have played havoc with the series ranking of the young rider who was picked up by Swift Suzuki mid-season. Both of Scott's moto victories actually came when he was a KTM privateer and that sort of form – along with his fifth place finish in an MX1 moto at Canada Heights – are the sort of skills that alerted the Swift team to Scott's speed and tenacity.

Even more inconsistent than Elderfield is Bournemouth's Lewis Abbot who'd amassed an uninspiring six points prior to Foxhill. First in moto one and runner up in race two, Lewis leapfrogged from outside the top 25 to 10th in the series thanks to his Foxhill form.

Enjoying his first year on a full size bike, James Hutchinson currently sits eighth in the series and if it weren't for a race one DNF at Donington and a no-show at Torrington he'd surely be in with a shout of taking the series win. James' worst finish of the year is fourth which – if he can stay healthy – makes him one of the favourites for next year's title.

With the fourth and final round of the series being held at Brampton – which is a regular stop on the schoolboy national tour – this month (August 17) you can definitely expect fireworks to fly as although it looks like the first two positions in the series are secure there's everything to play for in the lower ranks.



Irish ace Edward Allingham leads the series standings with just one round to go



Josh Waterman loses his red plate at Foxhill



Kelvin Townsend jumps his way through the famous Foxhill valley



SERIES STANDINGS

MX2

1	Edward Allingham	(PAR Honda)	110 points
2	Josh Waterman	(Team Green Kawasaki)	97
3	Sam Davis	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	84
4	Joe Gregory	(Danger UK Honda)	80
5	Tom Watts	(PAR Honda)	76
6	Scott Elderfield	(Swift Suzuki)	74
7	Lloyd Morgan	(KTM)	73
8	James Hutchinson	(Bikesport KTM)	60
9	Josh Spinks	(Redline KTM)	55
10	Lewis Abbot	(MX World KTM)	53

MAX!

THE TIP-TOP CARROT-TOP CLIMBS OUT OF A HOSPITAL BED TO TAKE HIS DEBUT WIN ON A 250F...

Going 10mph down the freeway is not the way I expected to spend the nine-hour drive up to Mammoth Mountain which should have only taken four hours. But once towed into the track by the water truck we unloaded Mary Jane and did some burnouts in our practice session. We then had three days of getting acclimatized before the racing began!

So we had a lot of fun on our mountain bikes and luckily Devin had put in some 450EXC bikes so we could get around. It was nothing like southern California – there were trees! It was a lot like Bulgaria and the weather was perfect every day. It's known as one of the most scenic and exciting events of the amateur schedule and they didn't disappoint.

The mini week started on Monday and didn't go as well as hoped. I took a few moto wins but an unfortunate crash led to me being sat in a hospital bed. The doc said I had to rest for eight weeks but as always I didn't have that long so I was back out the next day not feeling too good but preparing for the big bikes.

Let alone having the crash, I was also going into my first ever race on the 250F! Everyone down at KTM had done a wicked job on my bike – we may have the slowest truck but we definitely have the fastest bikes!

I was going in with some super-fast guys and in my heat race managed to pull the holeshot. I was then able to break away from the rest of the pack while they were all getting tangled up with each other to take the win! In the final my flyin' machine went straight to the front thanks to a neat holeshot. It wasn't long until the pressure started building and one of the Suzuki riders tried to make a move. I held my position and eventually took the win! That was awesome – taking my first ever 250F wins in my first ever 250F races...

That night we were all sat in the pool at our hotel when someone started shouting, we looked up and saw a bear! Yep, a BEAR! It was so cool. Something that wasn't so cool happened on the way back from the track... Because we only had two 450EXCs we had to double up. I went on one with my dad and Jordan and Devin went on the other. Seeing as Devin didn't feel comfortable on the bike with someone on the back she let Jordan drive – the problem was that he's only 15 and didn't have a driver's licence and as you can guess he got pulled over by the cops (I was laughing). Luckily the Devmeister got us out of it!

The next day I was ready to go again and with Murray Miller the track official showing me the lines I was ready to win another title. I placed second in my heat and was 'ready to race'.

Once again I managed to squeeze the holeshot and make an early break in the Main. I kept out in front for the remainder of the race and brought my KTM home to the top step of the podium! It was an amazing week and I had so much fun with the team (Devin, Joe and Mike). I can't wait until next year! And thanks again Murray...

Soon after Mammoth we headed to 'da east side' over in Virginia. We were staying with Zach Osbourne and Al Albiker to prepare for Loretta Lynn's in two weeks. We had a lot of fun riding and training, also some European guys came to race and train with us. After a while in Virginia we found ourselves at the World Minis in Oklahoma which was the week before LL. I've been there once before in 2005 on the 65s and had a great time so I am hoping for more of the same!

Tune in next month to find out what happens...

Max

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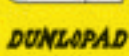
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Rickie Roderick fights his way to fifth in the SW85s at Whitby

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BANKJOB!

WATSON WINS AT WHITBY

The WP Elite Youth Cup series – quite possibly the country's most exciting schoolie race series – cruised past the halfway mark with round four at Skelder Bank, Whitby, where despite persistent precipitation some slick organisation made sure all five blocks of racing got out of the gate over the weekend.

When you come from Cumbria you get used to more than your fair share of rain – the lakes in the Lake District have to get topped up somehow – so 65cc class leader Ben Green was in his element, taking three wins and a further two podium finishes to extend his lead in the series. Josh Coleman and Joe Jefferies took the other two race wins but it was the super-consistent Danny Lanfear who ended the weekend second overall ahead of Todd Kellett.

Ben Watson was on top of the podium in the SW85s thanks partly to a pair of wins but championship leader James Dunn made sure he stayed on course for the title with three race victories for second overall, his weekend only partly spoiled by a disappointing finish in race three. Adam Sterry made it two podium finishes on the bounce in third.

Up in the BW85cc class it was all about Luke Hawkins. Ryan Houghton and Brad Pocock managed a race win each but Luke crossed the line in front three times out of five to take the overall by 21 points from Anthony Mark Reville with Ryan third after a rear wheel puncture in the final moto dropped him down the leaderboard.

A cracking 1-2-1-1-2 card was good enough to give Christian Taylor the decision in the Elite Senior group from Jack Plowman who took the other two race wins and a consistent Ryan Turner while up in the Open class Scott Elderfield won the first three races, finished second in the fourth and then DNFed the final moto. But his rivals' inconsistency meant even with a no-score Scott ran out on top with Lewis Tombs and Ben Field making sure of the final two steps on the podium with solid last race performances.

For more info on the series go to www.eliteyouthcup.co.uk



BILLY DOES DERBY!

CRUISING THE INTERNET AT HOME AIN'T CUTTING IT FOR BILLY SO HE'S SHIPPED OUT TO GO RIDING – AND DEN BUILDING – WITH TOMMY SEARLE...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Suttly

I've moved down to Derby again. I had a little moment with myself while sat at home on my PC with the blistering sunshine coming through my window. The little angel and the devil on my shoulders are normally always arguing, giving me a choice most of the time whether to be bad or good but it was like both of them were agreeing with each other for the first time...

Why was I sat indoors on the internet when I could be outside doing something? The main reason was that I had no-one to play with. Everyone was busy working and Bry has a new hobby called golf! I f*****g hate golf! What a **** sport! I actually tried my hardest to get into it, it seems like the more grown-up sport to do these days, like an evolution of games over the years. From BMXing when you were six, then mountainbikes, motorbikes, cars, then you drive to football or the gym or you find something productive to do with your day like shopping or the cinema but whatever you're doing you're driving there! I'm over it!

I wanna play on my BMX again, I wanna cruise the village and look for jumps to do – even building them is fun! I had to make a change, no longer was I gonna surf the same six websites 20 times a day with the sun scorching outside. So I made some phone calls, packed my stuff and moved down to Derby to do some riding



and training with Tommy again.

Tommy is in the same boat as me really and after we've done our training our day is free to do what we like – providing we have the right amount of rest. So it's cool to hang out with him and Ed again and make the most of the summer. So since I've been down we've found some sweet trails and everyone has the BMXing bug again! To hell with golf! We've been making dens, building jumps, making slip and slides, doing many a 40-minute moto round Ed's track and even had a day freeriding in an old quarry which was sick! We found this ridiculous tabletop that took me about half-an-hour to get the balls to jump it and the only reason I went for it in the end was because the police turned up to throw us off so I busted it out right in front of them just to be cheeky! It was insane though! Then straight after I done it Tommy came round and busted it out too! The police were all right after they saw us do it – they kinda realised we weren't bing bashers looking for trouble and let us off with a warning!

This column is fresh off a return to Foxhill for the British championship and what a weekend! I loved the track, like really loved it! I'm not normally a fan for riding Foxhill but this time round was amazing. The track had been prepped absolutely awesome, there was fresh dirt, the jumps were sweet and even a couple new

sections. The weather was scorching – maybe the hottest of the year in Britain – and the track was watered to perfection! There wasn't a drop more water needed after the first watering in the morning which is how it should be. A little bit wetter in the morning makes the track perfect.

Everything was groomed on the hills, fences put up, lots of parking and nice grassy pits. I was pumped to be back at the British championship again after missing the last round – still gutted I'm not gonna make it a perfect season but I've kept the streak up for the races I've entered at least and I'm loving riding my bike right now.

South Africa was the first race my shoulder was 100 per cent. I always enjoy the far away races and I was really looking to try to win that race the week before. I had been training so hard and feeling so good on the bike that my confidence was up and I wanted to put in a good GP. Qualifying and the warm-up practices were going good – in second warm up I poled it by two seconds! I was bang up for qualifying but maybe a touch too much excited as I only managed 10th place which I was not happy about! The sun started to come down around half four in the evening and it was a really nasty low sun. Most of us came in after a lap to have huge amounts of duct tape plastered from their peak to the chinpiece in attempt to keep the sun from

blinding us! I'm sure the guys who went pole must have been riding blind for half the lap! I put in a couple of strong races – I went 7-5 – but still that was only good enough for seventh overall. I was a bit pissed off with that. The first race my pace was too easy so that has been something I've been working on during the week. The second race I pushed all the way to the end and it felt brilliant but my line choices weren't great and I got passed in the same spot a couple of times before I changed. Pourcel gave me a bit of payback too! I finished fifth though and I closed in on the front guys in the last three laps so I took the positives from the weekend, enjoyed the trip and have been training hard since I've been back.

Me and Tommy flew to Belgium a couple of weeks ago for two days testing at Lommel. Everything went better than expected for me, normally I woulda been like a fish out of water at that place but I was riding well and even done a couple of 40s round there so I was fair pleased with myself! It was the first time I'd really got to hang out with Steve Boniface too and he's really cool. So the team is working really well together at the moment and we keep improving the bike every week so I'm working hard to get a win before the end of the season – I really, really need to win a race at least!

Ed



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